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EMPOWERING GROWTH

Express Industry
Council of India

THE FUTURE OF EXPRESS CARGO CLEARANCE IN INDIA

ECCS in the New Customs Integrated System

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2025

Contents

Abbreviations

AADHAR - Unique Identification Authority of India	**ICES** - Indian Customs EDI System
AC/DC - Assistant Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner	**IDPMS** - Import Data Processing and Monitoring System
AEO - Authorized Economic Operator	**IEC** – Import Export Code
API – Application Programming Interface	**IGM** - Import General Manifest
AWB - Airway Bill	**KYC** - Know Your Customer
CBIC - Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs	**LEO** - Let Export Order
CBE - Courier Bill of Entry	**LRM** - Local Risk Management
CCR - Compulsory Compliance Requirement	**MoU** - Memorandum of Understanding
CEP - Courier, Express, and Parcel	**NOC** - No Objection Certificate
CIS – Customs Integrated System	**NRM** - National Risk Management
CRN - Cross Reference Number	**OTP** - One-Time Password
CSB - Courier Shipping Bill	**PGA** - Partner Government Agency
ECCS - Express Cargo Clearance System	**RBI** - Reserve Bank of India
ECM - Express Cargo Manifest	**RMS** - Risk Management System
EDS - Express Delivery Services	**RoDTEP** - Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products
EICI - Express Industry Council of India	**RoSCTL** - Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies
ECL - Electronic Cash Ledger	**RTO** - Return to Origin
ENS - Entry Summary Declarations	**SIP** - Self-Initiated Payment
EXIM – Export Import	**SWIFT** - Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade
GDP - Gross Domestic Product	**TR-6** - Challan for Tax Payment
GST - Goods and Services Tax	**UAT** - User Acceptance Testing
HAWB - House Airway Bill	**USD** - United States Dollar
ICT - International Courier Terminals	**WCO** - World Customs Organization

Executive Summary

The express industry plays a pivotal role in global trade, providing integrated door-to-door transport of documents and goods. It connects enterprises, individuals, and SMEs to global value chains, ensuring the timely delivery of time-bound shipments. The express cargo industry in India has emerged as a cornerstone of the logistics industry, catering to the requirements of multiple industry segments and individual customers. Over the years, the industry has undergone a significant transformation, driven by the need for speed and efficiency in facilitating the movement of time-sensitive, high-value goods. Embracing advanced technologies while ensuring 100% compliance, the express industry has successfully delivered services within tight timelines and maintained business competitiveness, thereby becoming a critical part of India's overall trade ecosystem. Moreover, express services are a key driver of e-commerce, aligning with the Government of India's vision for ease of doing business and fostering greater integration into global markets. Importantly, express cargo services also align with the World Customs Organization's (WCO) immediate release guidelines, reinforcing its global best practices in trade facilitation.

The EXIM clearance of express cargo is carried out using the Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS), which was developed jointly by the Express Industry Council of India (EICI) and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) and launched in 2017. Prior to the ECCS, the customs clearance of courier goods was facilitated manually, leading to a process heavily reliant on physical documentation and manual intervention. Recognizing these challenges, both the industry and authorities identified the need for a separate clearance platform outside CBIC's larger ICEGATE system. This necessity arose because express clearance processes differ significantly from traditional clearance processes at sea, land, and air cargo terminals. The differences in nomenclature and processes within the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998 (amended 2010), necessitated a customized system that recognized the specific operational requirements of express cargo. Given the high volume and urgency of express shipment declarations, immediate clearance upon arrival using automation became essential for efficient deliveries. The manual operation, reliant on paperwork and multiple steps, proved inadequate and time-consuming, defeating the very purpose of express cargo services. Thus, a robust automated system integrating compliance and clearance processes was urgently required to manage these demands effectively.

ECCS was developed in consultation with industry stakeholders to address these issues, setting a benchmark in digitization and trade facilitation. It exemplifies how a well-designed, stakeholder-driven platform can transform customs processes. The system was built to accommodate the express industry's requirement for speed, handling high volumes of declarations through features such as bulk filing, barcode scanning, and real-time synchronization of physical and digital status of goods. Further, ECCS aligns with the Government of India's initiatives on ease of doing business and fostering the growth of e-commerce in India, positioning it as a model for efficient, paperless clearance and compliance

systems. As India aims to become a USD 30 trillion economy under the Viksit Bharat mission by 2047, express cargo will be instrumental in supporting trade, e-commerce, and MSME growth.

Achieving the target of Viksit Bharat by 2047 would require significant trade facilitation initiatives across various segments of the trade ecosystem in the country. As part of these facilitation measures, the CBIC is moving towards integrating all clearance platforms into a single unified base. The objective is very clear - streamline processes, avoid duplication, remove redundancies and reduce costs. Whilst the initiative is a big step towards logistics efficiency in the country, however, the express cargo clearance must retain its operational integrity and efficiency within this larger system. The proposed Customs Integrated System (CIS) must build on the existing ECCS's strengths to address the unique requirements of the express industry while maintaining efficiency. The new system should be designed to preserve speed, streamline operations, and introduce modular workflows that align with the distinct nature of express cargo processes. By ensuring that the express industry's critical requirements are met, India can strengthen its position as a global leader in logistics and trade facilitation, advancing towards a modern, digital, and competitive customs framework that supports its ambitious economic growth targets.

Therefore, as the CBIC plans to move towards a unified platform, it is crucial to acknowledge and understand the unique requirements of the clearance process of the express industry. Acknowledging this gap, this report comes out with key recommendations on the integration of ECCS into the CIS. First and foremost, the existing features of the ECCS should be integrated into the CIS.

Key Recommendations

The express clearance module should be distinctly designed within the CIS platform, in alignment with the WCO's Immediate Release Guidelines for Express Cargo.

CIS must ensure that there are separate modules for different modes of clearance like express, air, maritime, postal or other cargo so that failure of one system does not impact clearance in other modes.

The express industry should be engaged at every stage of the CIS development process, including requirement gathering from trade, system design, User Acceptance Testing (UAT), and implementation, to ensure seamless integration and successful deployment

Existing features such as real-time status updates, bulk filing, bulk OOC/ LEO, auto OOC/LEO and other functionalities should be incorporated into the express module of the CIS. These proven features, used by both regulators and operators, are essential for the efficient processing and clearance of express shipments.

The express clearance module on the CIS should include all functionalities that are currently provisioned through ICEGATE. The existing dual-system setup creates inefficiencies, requiring additional resources and resulting in increased dwell time.

The express module on CIS should be API-enabled to ensure seamless interconnectivity and meet future requirements for system scalability and integration.

Enhanced risk management system that balances effective risk mitigation with improved facilitation for express cargo.

The examination process for express shipments should be system-driven, reducing manual interventions that often lead to additional examinations and extended dwell times for time-sensitive cargo.

A dedicated help desk should be established specifically for the express industry users, offering targeted support for express module related issues.

Scheduled downtime should be restricted to once a week, preferably on Monday mornings from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, as this time generally has minimal impact on business operations.

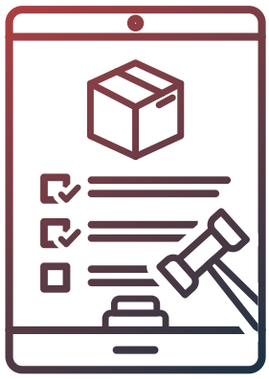
Data which is relevant for registration or clearance that is available with the government in various other systems like GST, Banks, etc. should not be asked repeatedly, this only leads to duplication of work and delays in clearance. Instead, the framework should be made in such a way that data from various other government platforms required in the clearance or other related activities could be linked to the CIS.

In addition to these recommendations, the report identifies other areas which need reform and facilitation that would help the express industry to get rid of the bottlenecks, increase its scope of operations and amplify industry's economic contributions. Some of these recommendations include:

System related Recommendations

- Creating a User-Friendly Data Dashboard
- Developing an Exchange Rate Notification Mechanism
- Realtime Message Exchange between the Express Clearance System and Trade
- Digitization and Automation of Form-1 for Imports
- Upgrading Document Size for Uploading
- Digitization of Payments other than Duty
- CCR for Imports Before Duty Payment

Regulatory Reforms



- SWIFT Integration with the Express Clearance Platform
- Customization in the Faceless Customs Program
- Digitizing No Objection Certificates (NOC) for Disposal of Unclaimed Goods
- Eliminating Fresh Filing Requirement for Transfer of Shipments from Express to Air Cargo
- Upgrading Ceiling Value for CBE-XII and CBE XIII Consignments
- Reforming the Declaration Amendment Procedure
- Auto-Approval for Return to Origin
- Reform for Flight Change Requests
- Doing away with Re-weighing of the Export-bound Cargo
- Simplifying and Promoting Advance Filing of CBE
- Simplifying the KYC Validation
- Doing away with Storing KYC Data for 5 years

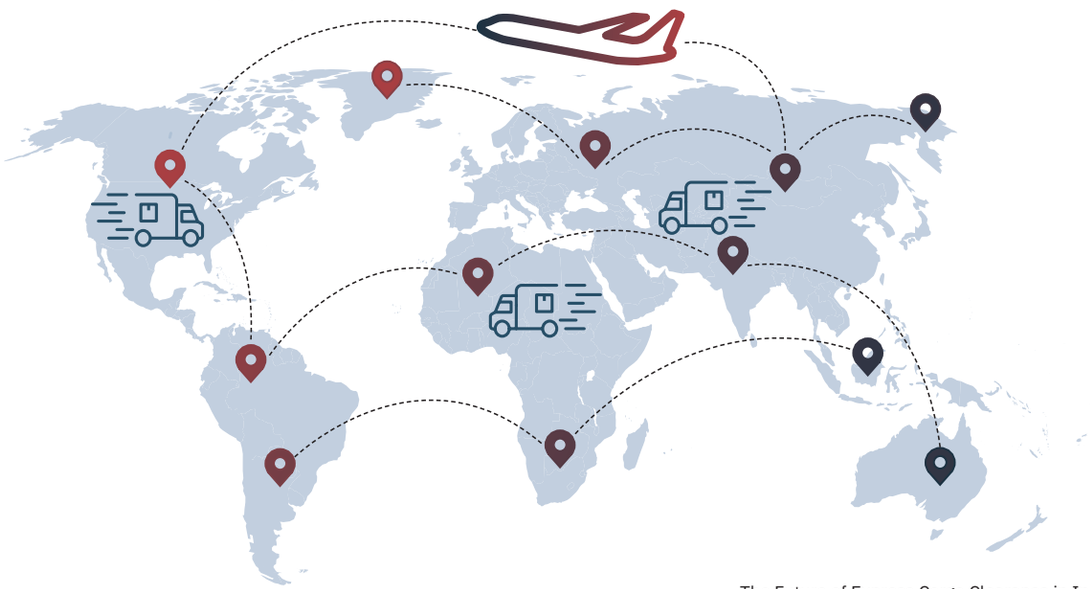
By addressing the challenges and implementing the recommendations outlined, the CIS can enhance India's position as a global leader in logistics and trade facilitation, aligning with the nation's ambitious economic growth targets. This report serves as a comprehensive guide to achieving these objectives.

This report is rooted in a comprehensive methodology, incorporating consultations with key stakeholders such as industry players, traders, members of the CBIC, as well as extensive fieldwork at major terminals and clearance facilities. These efforts provided valuable insights into the operational and regulatory challenges faced by the express cargo industry and helped craft targeted recommendations for improvement. The collaborative approach underlying this report reflects a shared vision between the express cargo industry and regulatory bodies to align operational needs with the government's vision of fostering economic growth and streamlining trade processes.

Comparison of X-Ray Screening

	India	Hong Kong	Japan	Vietnam	Australia
LPI Ranking (2023)	38	7	13	43	19
Cost of logistic (% of GDP)	14	N/A	8	17	8.6
100 % X-ray screening by customs	Yes	No	No	No	No
X-Ray machine Provided by	Custodians	Customs	Customs	Custodian or Customs	Customs
Primary reason for Screening-Customs enforcement	Preventing smuggling, misdeclaration	Risk-based approach	Risk-based approach	Risk-based approach	Risk-based approach

Source: World Bank, Experts Inputs



Introduction

In the ever-evolving global economy, express cargo services are the linchpin of international trade, ensuring goods' swift and reliable movement across borders and facilitating seamless trade operations. Owing to the escalating demand for speedy delivery of goods has this premise been integrated into the very workings of cargo services in the world, birthing the 'express' cargo industry that facilitates the delivery of high-value, time-sensitive goods. Express cargo refers to a streamlined logistics service designed to ensure expedited clearance, transport, and delivery of goods. This includes items ranging from essential medical supplies and high-value electronics to critical documents and perishable commodities. What sets express cargo apart is its ability to provide guaranteed, time-bound delivery, often within 24 to 48 hours, through highly coordinated systems that integrate advanced technology, efficient transportation networks, and customs facilitation.

Importantly, Express cargo services align with the World Customs Organization's (WCO) Immediate Release Guidelines designed to expedite the clearance of time-sensitive shipments. These guidelines ensure a swift and efficient release process while maintaining the necessary balance of security and compliance.

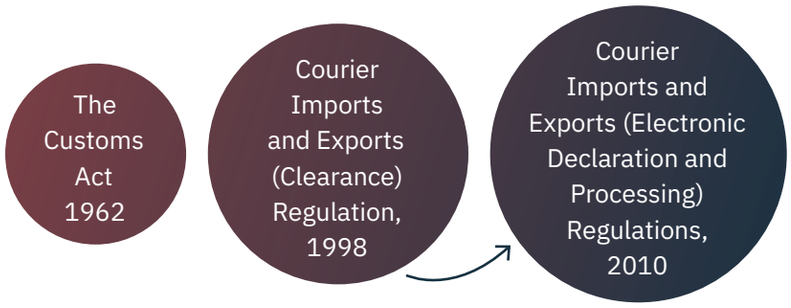
As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the role of express cargo in sustaining the momentum of global commerce cannot be overstated. The growth of this industry has not only ensured the smooth transport of goods but has also enhanced the competitiveness of businesses that rely on speed and reliability to meet stringent timelines and adapt to consumer expectations for expedited deliveries. In turn, on a macro scale, the express industry has played a pivotal role in supporting global supply chains by reducing lead times, minimizing disruptions, and ensuring a seamless flow of goods, eventually facilitating economic growth. The express industry also plays a vital role in generating both direct and indirect employment across various sectors include pickup and delivery services, IT software development and support, warehouse management, aviation-related roles, clearance operations, infrastructure development etc.

> **Importantly, Express cargo services align with the World Customs Organization's (WCO) Immediate Release Guidelines**

India's express cargo services have witnessed remarkable growth over the years, establishing themselves as a critical component of the nation's logistics framework. This progress can be traced back to the foundation laid by the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, commonly known as the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998, introduced by the Central Board of Indirect and Customs (CBIC). At a time when India's logistics and trade sectors were evolving to meet the demands of globalization, the legislation sought to provide a structured regulatory framework for courier services. The Courier Regulations was a pioneering legislative effort aimed at addressing the burgeoning demand for streamlined courier and parcel services. It sought to regulate the rapidly growing courier industry by standardizing operations, enhancing

transparency, and ensuring compliance with customs and trade norms. Setting clear guidelines for handling courier consignments, played a foundational role in enabling courier companies to operate more efficiently and cater to the needs of a growing consumer base.

Regulatory **Framework for Express Cargo Clearance** in India



To address the growing demand and align with global technological advancements, the Indian Courier Regulation 1998 evolved into the Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010. These regulations introduced provisions for the electronic processing of import and export declarations for goods transported by courier, marking a pivotal step toward modernizing and streamlining the industry. Designed to replace traditional manual customs procedures, the regulations aimed to establish a technology-driven approach, enabling faster and more efficient clearance of courier shipments.

Over the years, the customs clearance process and the express cargo industry have made significant headway by embracing technological innovations to enhance efficiency. A prominent change brought by the Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010 regulations was the digitization of key processes, such as the electronic filing of customs declarations for imports and exports. This transformation has played a crucial role in aligning India's courier and express cargo operations with global standards, paving the way for a more streamlined and responsive logistics ecosystem. Even though the Courier Regulations was amended in 2010, it still took another 7 years for the Government to finally introduce a digital platform for clearance of the express cargo in 2017. The dedicated digital platform - the ECCS, was an outcome of the Express Industry Council of India's partnership with the CBIC to facilitate express clearance and amplify growth in the sector.

As trade facilitation in India continues to evolve, the CBIC has initiated plans to implement a unified platform for the clearance of all types of cargo in the country. This ambitious move aims to benefit the Courier, Express, and Parcel (CEP) industry by standardizing processes across the sector and undertaking a complete digital overhaul of the existing ICES and ECCS platforms. The proposed integration seeks to modernize the industry, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and scalability to support the growing demands of global trade and India's economic vision of achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Express Industry End to End Solution for Customers

However, clearance treatment and processes must align with the specific modes of clearance. Integrating sea cargo, air cargo, land customs, express cargo, postal services, hand-carry shipments, and Inland Container Depots (ICDs) into a single system or process could prove detrimental to India's trade from a risk perspective. While a unified platform is desirable, distinct modules tailored to each mode of clearance are necessary to address their unique requirements. These modules can then converge into one system for reporting and statistical purposes, ensuring a balance between operational efficiency and risk mitigation. Putting all processes into a single-module risks oversimplifying the complexities of each mode, potentially compromising their efficiency and security. Instead, having common data elements and features across all modules while maintaining their individual characteristics would strike the right balance between integration and specialization.

The report underscores the critical role of the proposed unified platform in fostering India's economic growth by supporting the growing demands of the express industry and contributing significantly to achieving India's ambitious e-commerce milestones. Recognizing the unique requirements of the express cargo sector—particularly its need for immediate clearance and unparalleled speed—is essential for maintaining India's competitive edge in global trade.

The express industry was deliberately carved out from traditional air cargo operations to address the urgent demands of high-value, time-sensitive shipments, distinguishing it as a specialized sector within trade logistics. While air cargo services cater to broader logistics requirements, the express industry focuses on rapid and efficient movement of goods.

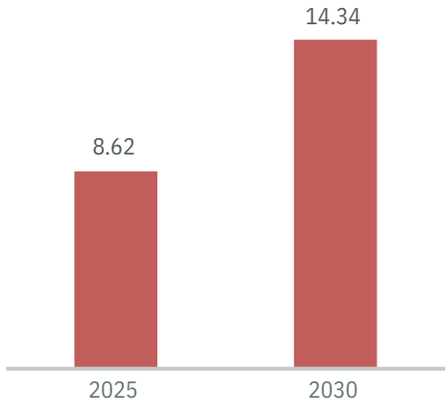
By tailoring the unified platform to address the operational intricacies of the express sector, this initiative not only ensures seamless trade facilitation but also strengthens India's position in global commerce. The report provides detailed insights and actionable recommendations to modernize processes, enhance efficiency, and align with India's vision for economic transformation, thus setting the stage for a robust and future-ready logistics ecosystem.

2.

Express Industry in India

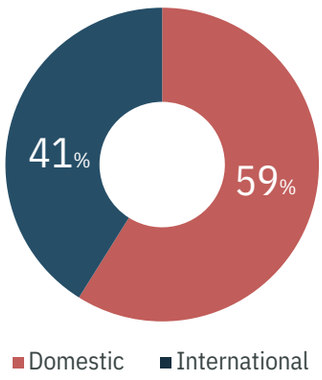
The India Courier, Express, and Parcel (CEP) Market size is estimated at USD 8.62 billion in 2025, and is expected to reach around USD 15 billion by 2030 growing at CAGR of 10.7%[1]. This surge, further accelerated by the e-commerce boom during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the critical need for efficient logistics systems to meet the rising demand for fast, reliable deliveries. The Express Delivery Services (EDS) sector plays a key role in this market, providing rapid, door-to-door delivery of a wide range of goods, from documents to high-value items, supported by real-time IT integration for seamless tracking.

Indian Courier, Express and Parcel (CEP) Market - USD Bn



Globally, the express delivery market is projected to grow from USD 263 billion in 2020 to USD 484 billion by 2030[2], with significant contributions from the Asia-Pacific region, including India. India's EDS sector alone expanded from USD 1.7 billion in 2012 to USD 5.5 billion in 2020, achieving a CAGR of 15.8%[3]. As one of the fastest-growing markets globally, India plays a vital role in the international CEP industry, contributing approximately 2% to the global turnover and shaping the future of express logistics.

Indian CEP Market: Market Share by Destination Segment - 2024



The express industry's growth has also been a direct result of the growing e-commerce in the country. The exponential growth of e-commerce, particularly with the emergence of new trade patterns such as the rise in direct business-to-consumer (B2C) and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) transactions, has fundamentally reshaped global trade dynamics. Consumers now play an increasingly active role in cross-border transactions, driving a surge in smaller consignments moving across international borders. This shift has significantly increased the workload for both businesses and border agencies, necessitating more efficient customs clearance mechanisms to keep pace with the evolving demands of the

1 Source: Mordor Intelligence

2 https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/express-delivery-market-to-reach-usd-484-38-billion-by-2030-at-a-cagr-of-6-4-----valuates-reports-301354955.html

3 https://www.statista.com/statistics/911202/india-express-industry-market-size/

digital economy. The Express Industry can emerge as a catalyst for growth, owing to its symbiotic relationship with the e-commerce sector. This highlights the importance of streamlined logistics operations. As e-commerce drives India's economic growth, the express industry must rise to meet the challenges by embracing innovation, digitization, and smart infrastructure. Best practices in logistics, such as live tracking, geofencing, and data analytics, can revolutionize operations, enhancing efficiency and customer satisfaction.

India's e-commerce sector is on a remarkable growth trajectory, projected to leap from USD 88.6 billion in 2022 to USD 299.01 billion by 2029, reflecting a robust CAGR of 21.5%[4]. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the e-commerce trend, as restrictions prompted consumers to embrace online shopping, mirroring patterns observed in Southeast Asia. Here, e-commerce sales grew fivefold between 2016 and 2021, with the pandemic propelling the sector into a new phase. India can draw valuable lessons from Southeast Asia's e-commerce evolution during the pandemic. Key strategies include investing in robust digital infrastructure, enhancing last-mile delivery networks, and fostering consumer trust through secure payment systems. By adopting these measures, India can effectively harness its e-commerce potential, contributing significantly to economic growth and aligning with the global shift towards digital commerce.

Indian e-com market by 2030

In that vein, the Government of India has recognized the transformative potential of e-commerce and has taken commendable steps to foster its growth. Key initiatives, such as the development of E-Commerce Export Hubs (ECEHs), underscore the government's vision of leveraging e-commerce to diversify the country's export basket, empower MSMEs, and connect them with new markets. These export hubs are a strategic move to enhance India's position in global trade and propel the growth of e-commerce exports. At the heart of this progress is the express industry, which plays a critical role in enabling the seamless and timely delivery that e-commerce demands. Addressing the challenges faced by the express industry, as highlighted in later sections of this report, will be pivotal in enhancing its capacity to support e-commerce-driven growth. The government's focus on reducing logistics costs—currently at 14% of GDP compared to the global average of 8%—through the National Logistics Policy (NLP)[5] emphasizes

4 https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/india-ecommerce-market?

5 https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-the-critical-role-of-indias-nlp-in-strengthening-the-e-commercenbspsector-3612137/#

streamlining the logistics infrastructure, improving profit margins, and fostering a thriving e-commerce ecosystem. These initiatives are pivotal to reducing bottlenecks and enabling seamless coordination between express logistics and e-commerce.

These developments to capture the e-commerce opportunity underscore the necessity of a seamless logistics network, as timely delivery and operational efficiency are paramount for customer satisfaction in the e-commerce ecosystem. A technically advanced and regulatory-aligned platform is critical to supporting India's ambitious growth vision while ensuring the seamless functioning of its digital economy and e-commerce infrastructure. Therefore, it is quite evident that the success of the e-commerce hubs depends heavily on the logistics support provided by the express industry.

Currently, cross-border e-commerce faces limitations due to challenges faced by the express industry which impact its efficiency and growth potential. For example, MSMEs, a cornerstone of the e-commerce ecosystem, encounter hurdles such as import duties on samples and e-commerce rejects. Import duties on samples used for evaluation or demonstration increase costs for businesses, while duties on returned goods complicate reverse logistics and reduce profitability. These challenges hinder MSMEs from fully leveraging the opportunities presented by the e-commerce boom.

The express industry, with its hallmark speed and efficiency, offers immense potential to bridge this gap. It can empower small e-commerce exporters, including those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, by providing a seamless and reliable platform for quick cross-border shipments. Additionally, e-commerce exporters face challenges in claiming export incentives like RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) and Advance Authorisation due to the current framework's preference for cargo mode over courier mode[6]. Addressing this disparity and integrating courier mode into these incentive structures would ensure that smaller exporters, particularly those in remote locations, have equitable access to government support programs. By resolving these issues, the express industry can become a catalyst for boosting exports, empowering MSMEs, and enhancing the competitiveness of small exporters across the country.

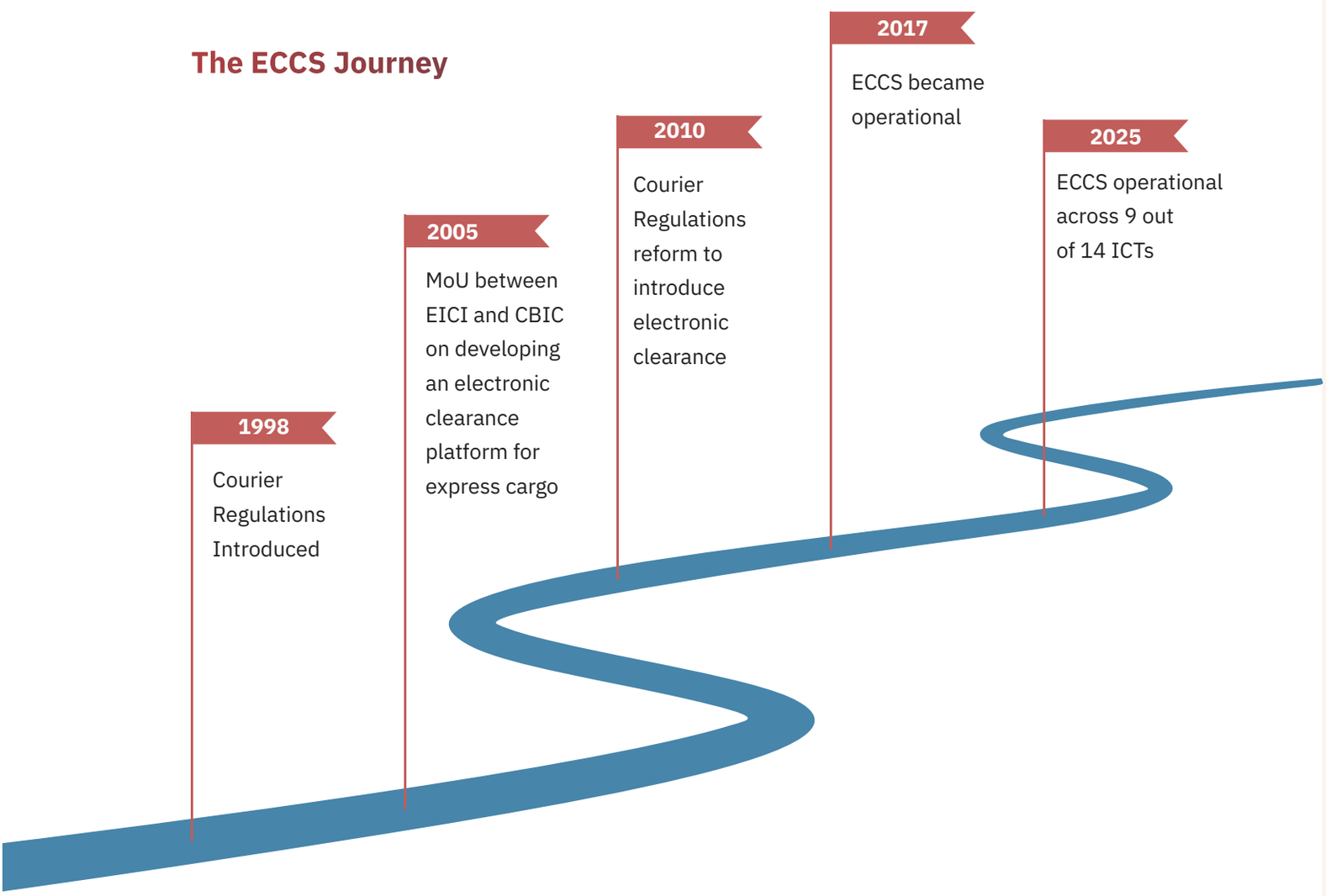
This highlights the importance of streamlined logistics operations for e-commerce. As e-commerce drives India's economic growth, the express industry must transform to meet the challenges by embracing innovation, digitization, and smart infrastructure. This can be achieved by eliminating bottlenecks and addressing regulatory and operational hurdles. Its role as a critical enabler of e-commerce will directly influence India's ability to achieve its economic goals, including becoming a global trade and logistics hub. The express industry's success will not only bolster e-commerce but also position India as a leader in the global digital economy. Therefore, as India moves towards the CIS, a unified clearance platform, the customized features critical for express clearance must not be compromised.

6 https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-03/Boosting%20Exports%20from%20MSMEs_March%2020244_0.pdf

2.1 Express Cargo Clearance System - ECCS

The launch of the ECCS in 2017 marked a transformative shift for India's express cargo sector, finally providing the industry with its dedicated paperless digital platform for clearance. This change was long overdue, as the manual processes that dominated pre-2017 operations undermined the core purpose of express cargo services—speed and seamless facilitation. Recognizing the critical importance of time in the express industry, the CBIC took a decisive step to bring an advanced and paperless system in the form of the ECCS. The ECCS was ahead of its competition in being a truly digital platform, doing away with manual processes and bringing efficiency to the trade ecosystem. It must also be noted that whilst bringing advanced technologies, the ECCS strictly maintained 100% compliance requirements to the regulations and was in line with the government's trade facilitation measures and the global market and compliance standards like the WCO.

The ECCS Journey



Salient **Features** of **ECCS**

Features

Bulk Upload and Output: ECCS allows users to upload CBE and CSB in bulk which is critical for the industry that handles a high volume of shipments. Simultaneously, the system also allows for bulk OOC and LEO.

Electronic Clearance: ECCS facilitates the electronic clearance of courier shipments, ensuring transparency and ease of clearance.

State-of-the-Art Technology: Built on cutting-edge technology for faster clearance, better compliance with rules, quick data reporting, and enhanced data security.

Risk Management System (RMS): Automated RMS facilitates nearly 90% of shipments.

Single Digital Workspace: Provides a common web-based digital workspace for all stakeholders including express companies, customs, and custodians.

Complete System Integration: Fully integrates with custodian infrastructure (bar code scanners).

Paperless Operations

100% Paperless Clearance: ECCS has resulted in completely paperless clearance, handling approximately 50,000 shipments per day from major express terminals in the country.

Electronic Payments: All duties and other fees are paid 100% electronically.

Single Click Online Submission: Couriers can file CBE/CSB through UI/Bulk upload via the internet in ECCS.

Comprehensive Online Process: The entire process, including invoice upload, P/L, CCR document, query reply, and duty payment, is conducted online.

Real-Time Monitoring

Auto OOC/LEO: Automatic Out of Charge (OOC) and Let Export Order (LEO) for facilitated and X-ray cleared consignments.

Real-Time Monitoring: Provides real-time monitoring and visibility to senior customs officers, enhancing trade facilitation and transparency.

Before ECCS, customs clearance processes relied heavily on manual procedures, which were labor-intensive and prone to delays. Tasks like filing declarations, consignment tracking, and data transmission involved significant paperwork and human intervention, often resulting in bottlenecks that disrupted the timely clearance of shipments. For example, filing forms like Express Cargo Manifest (ECM), Courier Bill of Entry (CBE), and Courier Shipping Bill (CSB) required physical submission, while tracking consignments lacked real-time capabilities, causing further inefficiencies.

> **The ECCS framework is in line with the country's vision of digitalizing all manual processes as stated by the Hon'ble Finance Minister during the 2025-2026 Budget Speech.**

The Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010, represented an initial effort to modernize the system. However, it took almost seven more years for the government to introduce a comprehensive digital platform. The ECCS platform allowed authorized couriers to upload essential forms digitally from their offices or terminals provided at service centres, eliminating the need for manual submission. It also automated key processes, including customs duty calculations, risk management, trans-shipment, and consignment tracking, ensuring faster and more accurate clearances.

One of the standout features of ECCS is its ability to process document images for millions of shipments even before their physical landing, enabling advance duty payment despite the short transit time. This integration of technology showcases how the express industry leverages evolving systems to ensure speed and security. The introduction of barcode scanning further revolutionized the clearance process, enabling quick and precise data transfer providing prompt updates on the clearance status of shipments. ECCS fosters seamless coordination among stakeholders, including Authorized Couriers, Custodians, and Customs officials (Assessment Officers, AC/DC Officers, and Superintendents). Each stakeholder can interact with the system based on their roles.

Key Differences between ECCS and ICEGATE System

Feature	ECCS	ICEGATE
Bulk filing	Bulk filing of declarations, critical for high volumes of shipments.	Does not support bulk filing; declarations are filed individually.
Bulk Output	Bulk OOC and LEO	Each BoE or SB is given OOC or LEO individually.
Auto Out of Charge (OOC) / (LEO)	Automated OOC/LEO, reducing delays and manual intervention.	Manual intervention for each OOC delaying clearance
Scheduled Downtime	Minimal downtime (120 minutes a week, Mondays 8:00 - 10:00 AM).	No scheduled downtime. System can be down for 6-8 hrs a week.
Data Integration	Real-time integration of consignment data using barcode scanning.	Limited integration; manual data entry at multiple stages.
Input Values	Accepts alphanumeric values for bills of entry and other documentation.	Only accepts numeric input, causing issues for express cargo
Operations	Paperless Operations: ECCS supports fully digitized processes, minimizing paperwork and ensuring seamless, efficient operations. Synchronous Updates: Synchronizes physical status of goods with digital status in real-time, enabling accurate tracking and faster clearance. Round-the-Clock Functionality: Specifically designed for 24x7 operations, addressing the express industry's critical need for speed and time-sensitive processing.	• Paper-Dependent Processes: While digitization exists, several processes still require physical documentation or manual interventions. • Asynchronous Updates: The digital status often lags behind the physical movement of goods, leading to discrepancies and delays in clearance processes. • Limited 24x7 Capability: Primarily optimized for traditional cargo, ICES/ ICEGATE experiences scheduled downtimes and delays in updating status, which can disrupt operations for time-sensitive consignments.
Facilitation for PGAs	SWIFT is not integrated, limiting PGA clearance capabilities.	Integrated with SWIFT, facilitating PGA approvals for goods.
Roll Out of New Module	New modules are developed with stakeholder consultation, incorporating their views, and rolled out with proper UAT sign-off.	UAT is confined to limited users, excluding ECCS users, leading to issues in modules like ECL and voluntary payment.
Stakeholder Meeting	Regular interaction with stakeholders, WZU to facilitate trade consultation, including quarterly ECCS Steering Committee meetings with participation from Customs, NCTC, ECCS users, Application Support Team, and Systems.	Limited consultation and stakeholder meetings. Express industry is not involved in consultations
Status Update	The clearance status is available by scanning the barcode on the shipment using a handheld barcode scanner	No status update using a scanner
Public Enquiry Portal	ECCS e-Mobility provides the present status of EXIM shipment and transmission of CBE to RBI-IDPMS.	No dedicated portal available

> **Over the years the ECCS has served as a benchmark in digitization and trade facilitation operating in line with the government's vision and regulations.**

Jointly developed by EICI (Express Industry Council of India) and Indian Customs, ECCS embodies the vision of creating a seamless, paperless, and competitive trade environment. Designed to align with India's "Ease of Doing Business" initiatives, ECCS has significantly contributed to creating a more efficient and globally competitive logistics ecosystem while laying the groundwork for future advancements in technology and infrastructure.

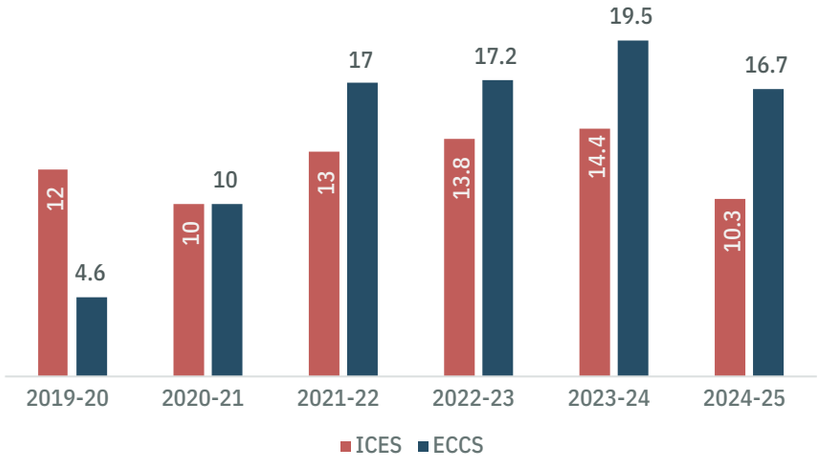
Through its digital transformation, ECCS now boasts a substantial digital footprint, emerging as one of the most advanced paperless clearance systems in the world.

This evolution aligns with global best practices and highlights India's strides in adopting cutting-edge trade facilitation measures, solidifying its position as a leader in modern customs and logistics processes.

Looking forward, the global trend of adopting auto-sort systems in customs processes presents an exciting opportunity for India's express cargo sector. These systems, which identify packages based on unique identifiers like package piece ID or CRN, highlight the potential for further innovation in India's express cargo landscape. Unlike sea or air cargo handling requirements, the express industry's focus on speed necessitates incorporating such advanced technologies into the customs framework. As ECCS continues to evolve, the system must be designed with a forward-looking approach, ensuring it remains competitive and adaptive to the unique operational demands of the express cargo sector.

EXIM Filings Handled by ECCS and ICES - Millions

In 2024, ECCS handled **1.6X** filings handled by ICES

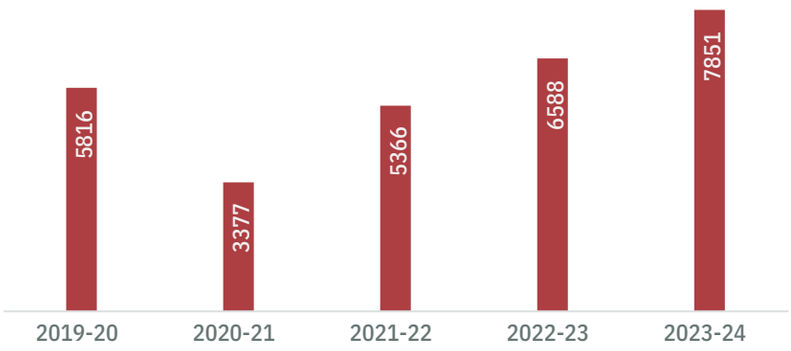


Source: ECCS

The ECCS has played a pivotal role in the growth of the express industry, facilitating seamless customs clearance and supporting the rising demand for express imports and exports. Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, the total volume of import and export bills handled by the ECCS grew significantly from 4.6 million bills to 19.5 million bills marking an astounding increase of 324%. In the same period, the revenue generated by Customs increased from INR 5816 crore to INR 7851 crore marking a surge of 35%. This growth trajectory highlights ECCS's effectiveness in meeting the increasing demands of the express industry. ECCS experienced significant growth, peaking at 19.5 million in 2023-24. This surge reflects ECCS's critical role in the express cargo sector, effectively meeting the operational demands of the fast-growing industry by enabling streamlined trade processes and facilitating bulk uploads to handle high volumes efficiently.

CBIC Revenue from the ECCS - INR Crores

35% growth
in CBIC revenue from ECCS between 2019 to 2024



The sustained rise in declarations emphasizes the importance of integrating the strengths of both ECCS and ICES into a Unified Customs Platform to cater to the demands of India's growing e-commerce and trade sectors. As trade volumes continue to increase, the ability to handle complex workflows, ensure speed and efficiency, and seamlessly integrate physical and digital operations becomes imperative. The performance of ECCS, particularly its role in enabling the express industry to thrive, highlights the need to preserve and enhance its strengths in the unified platform. By addressing existing challenges and building on the proven capabilities of ECCS, the unified system can align with India's vision of becoming a global trade hub while supporting sustained growth in the years to come. The significant growth reflected in the data reinforces the necessity of preserving and enhancing these features to ensure that the express cargo industry can continue to operate seamlessly as volumes rise.

General cargo managed through ICEGATE, has similarly witnessed substantial growth, emphasizing the importance of scalable solutions to accommodate increasing declarations. Introducing bulk filing and uploading modules akin to ECCS within ICEGATE could significantly streamline processes, reduce errors, and enhance

efficiency. Such enhancements would not only meet the growing demands of trade but also align with India's broader digital transformation and trade facilitation objectives.

> **ECCS also stands out for its planned downtimes, rigorous module testing, and smooth integration with other systems, all achieved without disrupting trade operations.**

In comparison, ECCS displayed moderate growth, increasing from approximately 1 crore (10 million) in 2019-20 to 1.4 crore (14 million) in 2021-22. While ECCS remains pivotal to the express cargo industry, its slower growth relative to ICEGATE highlights potential infrastructural or operational constraints that require attention. This divergence underscores the critical importance of ensuring ECCS is optimized to handle future demand. Strengthening ECCS through advanced technologies, improved scalability, and streamlined workflows will be essential to maintain its hallmark features of speed and efficiency.

Addressing these challenges is particularly significant in light of the proposed unified customs platform. Ensuring ECCS aligns with ICEGATE's growth trajectory while retaining its specialized capabilities will be vital to fostering a balanced, efficient, and modernized customs ecosystem that supports India's ambitious trade facilitation goals.

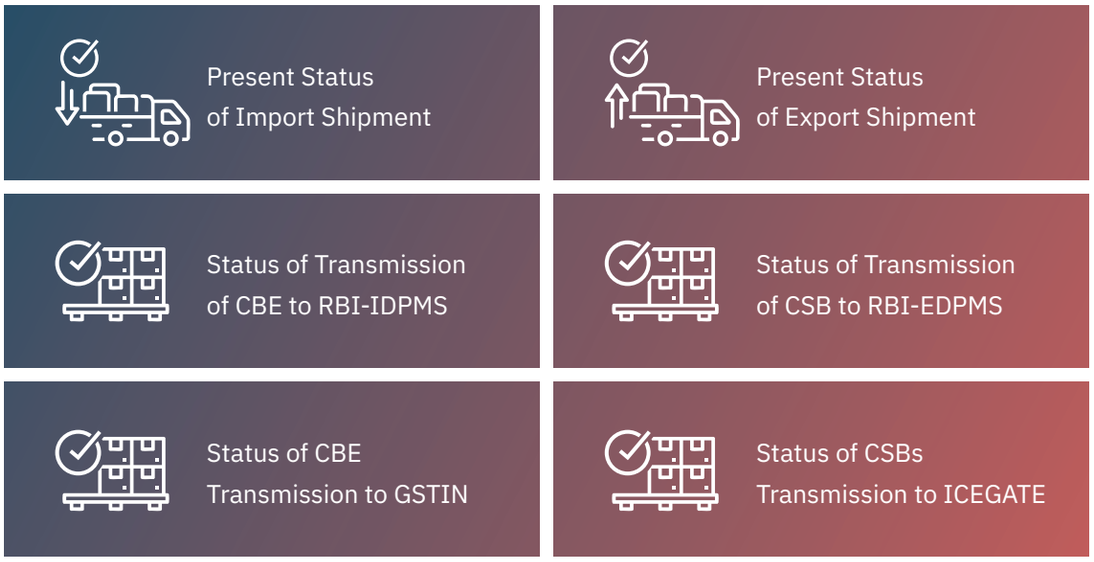
The growth of the express industry can also be gauged by looking at the revenues generated for CBIC. In the last five years, the revenues have grown from INR 5,816 crore in 2019-20 to INR 7,851 in 2023-24 recording a growth of approximately 35%. The decline in 2020-21 is owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This revenue growth aligns with the rising trade volumes and the expanding role of e-commerce in India's economy, emphasizing the importance of efficient customs clearance systems like ECCS. The steady upward trend reflects the system's capacity to support increasing demands while maintaining efficiency. Modernizing customs processes and integrating advanced technologies into a unified system is essential to streamline operations, enhance revenue generation, and support India's broader economic goals in a rapidly evolving global trade environment.

ECCS Mobility

The ECCS mobility application was developed for the trade and ECCS stakeholders to inform them about the live status of their courier consignment in ECCS. The application takes input parameters like HAWB and Courier name and provides a host of output parameters like CBE/CSB number, date and time of filing, live status of consignment, assessable value and Customs duty to be paid.

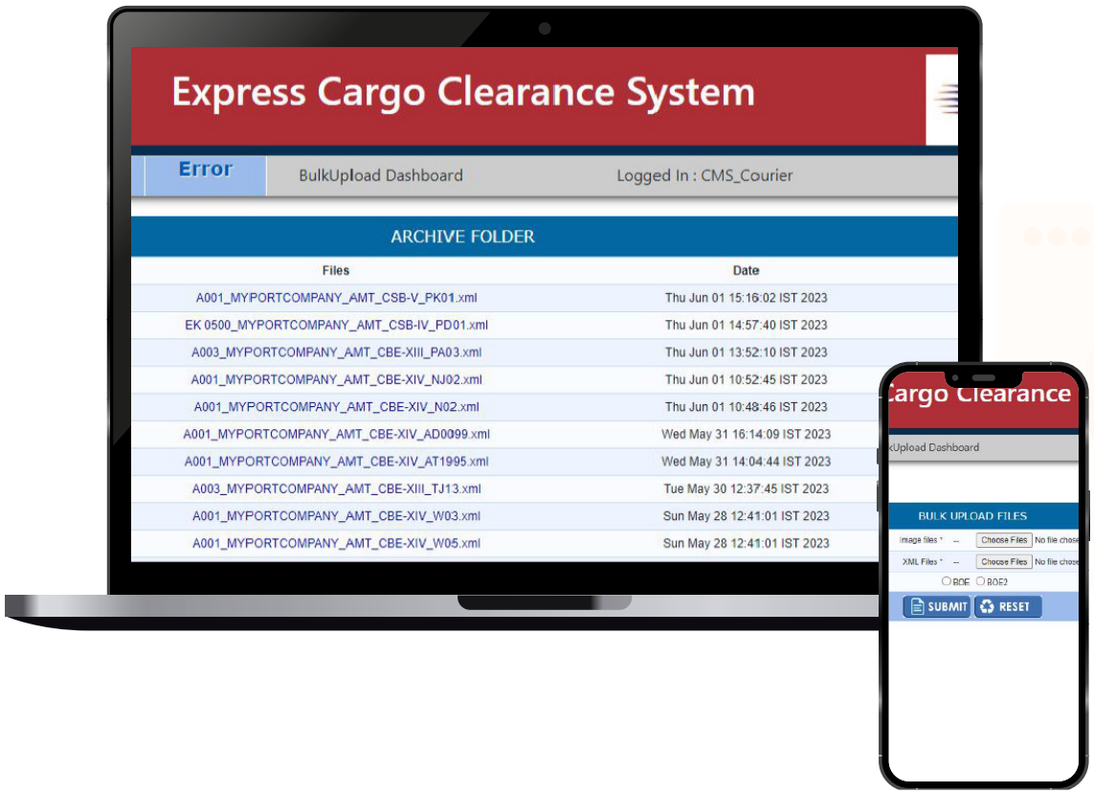
ECCS Public Enquiry Portal



Bulk Upload Utility in ECCS

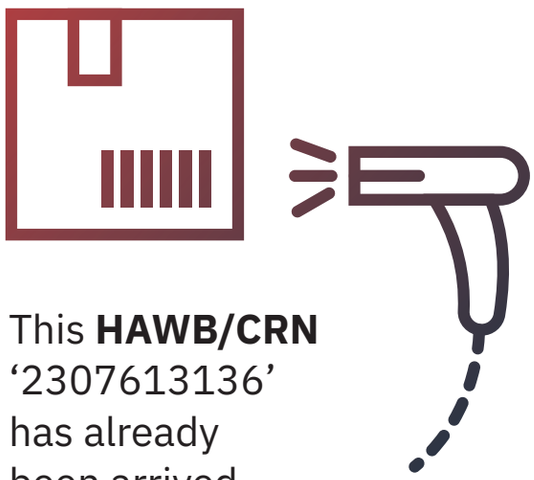
The ECCS offers a Bulk Upload Utility designed to streamline the submission process for authorized couriers. This feature enables users to upload multiple Courier Bills of Entry (CBEs) and Courier Shipping Bills (CSBs), along with their supporting documents, in a single click. By utilizing predefined formats such as XML and TIFF, couriers can efficiently manage large volumes of data, enhancing operational efficiency.

This important feature is integral to the daily operations of major courier companies, facilitating the filing of approximately 50,000 CSBs and CBEs daily across all nine International Courier Terminals (ICTs).



Automated Shipment Arrival Update via Barcode Scanning in ECCS

The ECCS system features an integrated barcode scanning mechanism for import and export shipments. When the barcode label, containing the AWB number, is scanned using the ECCS scanner, the system automatically checks for pre-filed data (Advance Filing) in ECCS. If the data is available, the shipment status is instantly updated as “Arrived,” confirming its entry into the Customs area. This automation enhances accuracy and efficiency in shipment tracking and clearance.



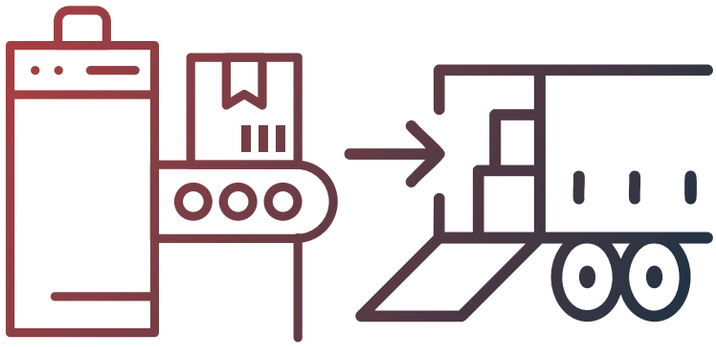
This **HAWB/CRN** ‘2307613136’ has already been arrived

Work Allocation Dashboard in ECCS

The Work Allocation Dashboard in ECCS provides real-time details of Courier Shipping Bills (CSBs) and Courier Bills of Entry (CBEs) awaiting Customs action. It features an intuitive menu for Customs officers to manage clearances efficiently. The dashboard also includes options for Refund, Re-Export, and Disposal modules, which are presently non-functional.

Exit Scan in ECCS

The exit scan feature in the ECCS ensures that only cleared cargo moves out of the terminal. It also allows for instantaneous message exchange, thereby reflecting the exact status of the cargo.



3.

Express Cargo Clearance Process Flow

The process flow in express cargo operations is a direct response to the industry's inherent need for speed and efficiency, making it a cornerstone of its functionality. Unlike general cargo, the processes for express cargo were not developed by the industry but were shaped and mandated by regulations. These regulations, designed to uphold the principles of rapid clearance and compliance, dictate the specific steps required for the movement of goods, from filing declarations to customs examinations and final clearance. This regulatory-driven framework has been seamlessly integrated into digital platforms like the ECCS, ensuring that the foundational need for speed remains uncompromised.

One key aspect of the process flow is the segregation of cargo based on regulatory categories, which is reflected in the various filing mechanisms. For example, different Courier Bills of Entry (CBE) are utilized depending on the type and value of goods being imported or exported, ensuring adherence to the local customs compliance requirements as well as immediate release guidelines of WCO for the express industry while maintaining operational efficiency,

Given the unique specifications and processes defined by regulation, it becomes imperative to maintain a distinct system tailored for express cargo within the broader customs framework. Attempting to merge express cargo with general cargo systems would risk diluting the speed and precision required by the express industry, undermining its core value proposition.

This makes it essential to critically examine the challenges and recommendations associated with express cargo processes. The following import and export process charts not only outline the current workflows but also highlight areas requiring improvement. By mapping these challenges and recommendations to specific stages of the process flow, we can better understand how to optimize operations and align them with the evolving needs of the express cargo industry.

Types of Courier Bills of Entry

CBE XI – Document Type Consignment

CBE XII – Samples Valuing < INR 10,000

CBE XIII – Dutiable Good of value < INR 1 lac

CBE XIV – Goods valuing > INR 1 lac or where additional data elements are required

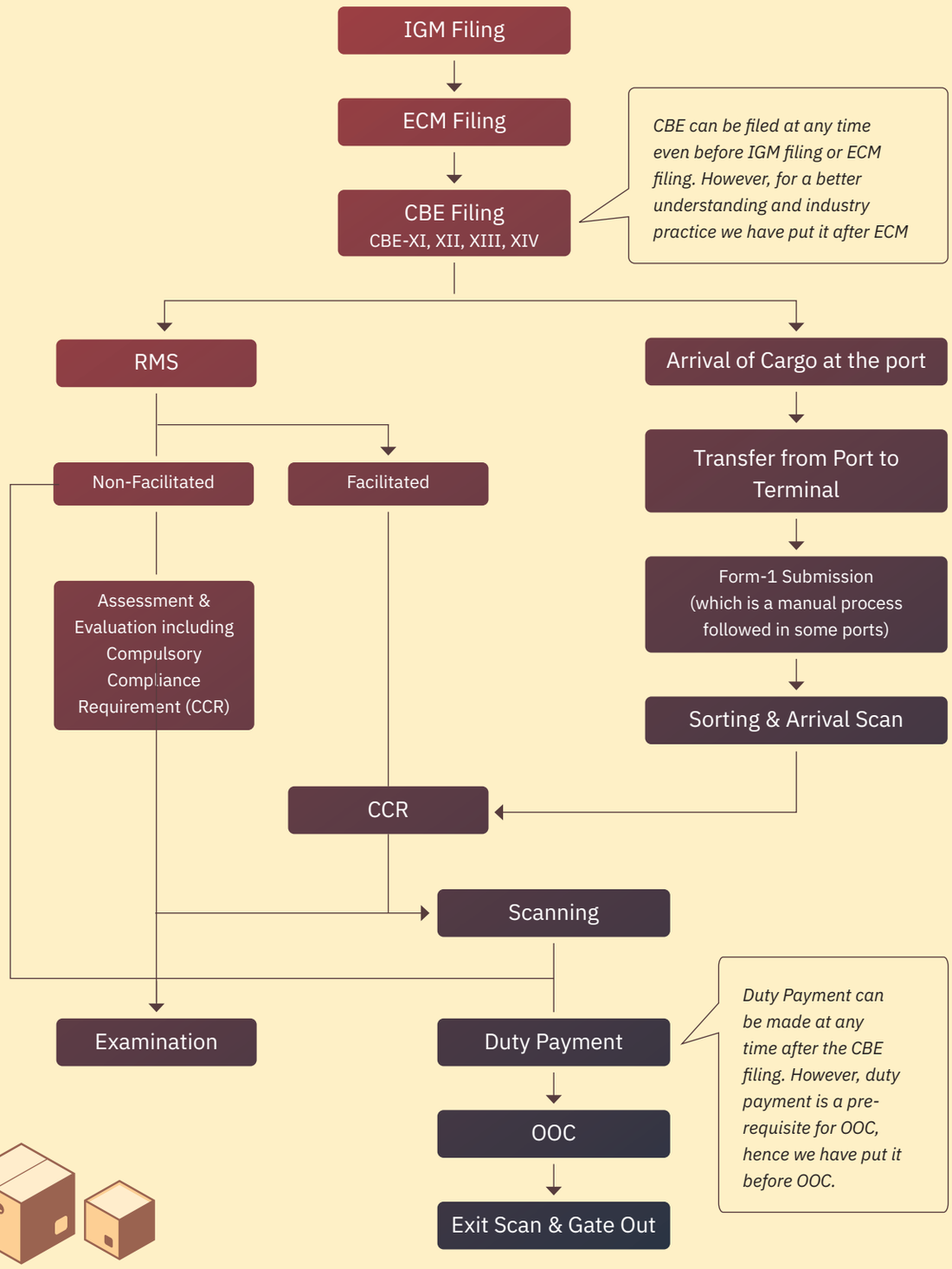
Types of Courier Shipping Bills

CSB III – Document Type Consignments

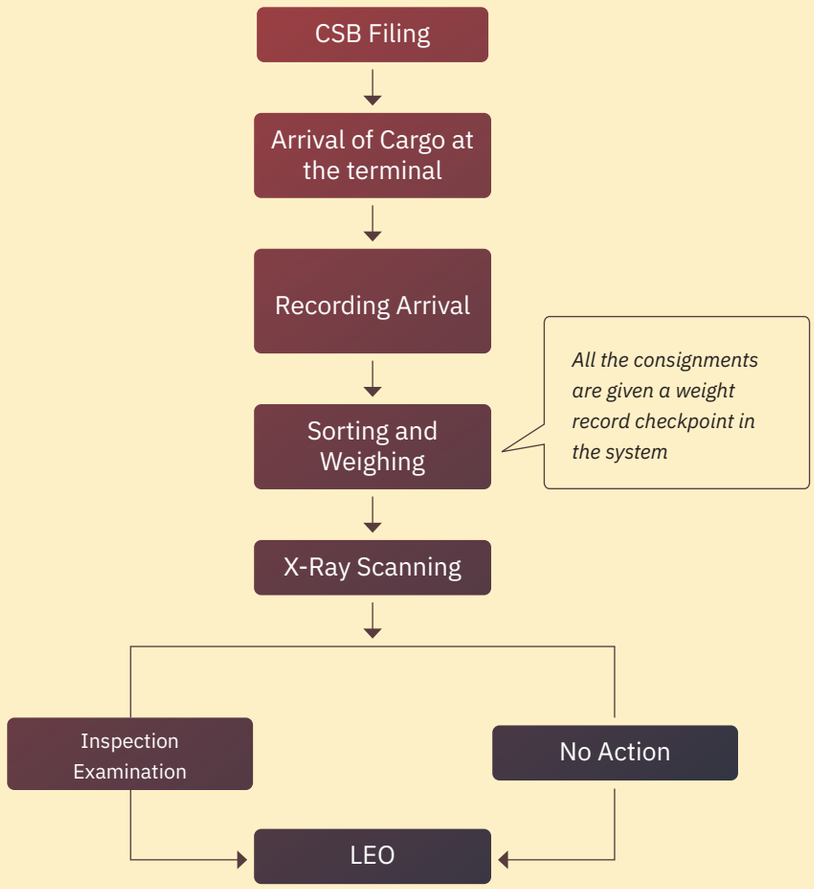
CSB IV – Gifts, Samples, non-commercial goods and re-export

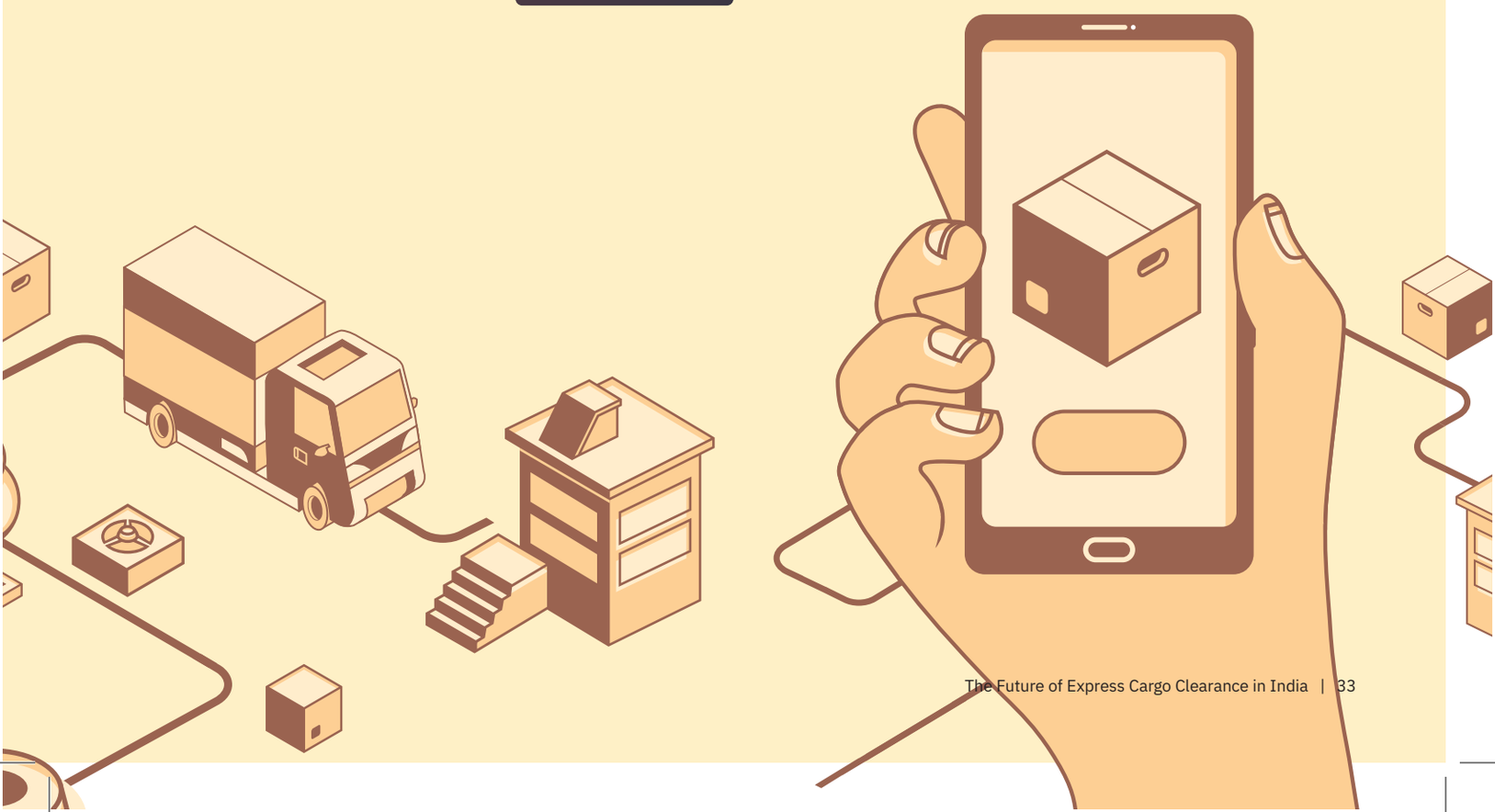
CSB V – Goods Valued less than INR 10 lac

3.1 Express Cargo Clearance Process – Import



3.2 Express Cargo Clearance Process – Export





4.

Critical Requirements for the Express Industry in the Customs Integrated System

The ECCS stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and stakeholder engagement in building effective, technology-driven trade facilitation platforms. A key strength of ECCS lies in its ability to ensure continuous stakeholder consultations before introducing new modules or functionalities. This consultative approach has enabled the system to address industry needs effectively, fostering innovations such as bulk upload features for declarations and the seamless synchronization of physical and digital statuses of goods. These advancements have not only streamlined operations but also underscored ECCS's role as a pioneering paperless clearance system.

One of its standout practices includes the careful planning and restriction of system downtimes to Mondays from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, minimizing disruption to critical operations. New modules, such as the Bulk Upload feature, are introduced only after rigorous testing by ECCS users, ensuring functionality aligns with user expectations and operational requirements. Moreover, the system's transition to the CBIC data centre was executed seamlessly, with no impact on clearance processes—demonstrating its robust planning and execution capabilities. Additionally, ECCS implemented the Electronic Cash Ledger (ECL) only after stabilizing the application for cargo users, ensuring no disruptions for ECCS users during this significant change. These measures reflect ECCS's strength in synchronizing physical and digital operations, underscoring its innovative approach to fostering efficiency in clearance processes.

The success of ECCS is built on a foundation of close cooperation and collaboration between the express cargo industry and the government, particularly the CBIC. This partnership has allowed ECCS to evolve into one of the most efficient systems globally, aligning with international best practices in paperless trade.

As India transitions toward a Unified System for customs clearance, it is imperative to extend this spirit of collaboration to ensure the smooth integration of processes, preserve the strengths of ECCS, and build a system that addresses the unique needs of the express industry while fostering the growth of the overall logistics ecosystem. In the pursuit of a unified customs platform, it is crucial to preserve and enhance the indispensable features of ECCS that cater to the unique operational demands of the express cargo industry.

The integration of ECCS into a broader unified structure must prioritize accommodating its core functionalities while introducing enhancements to ensure the seamless operation of the express cargo sector without disrupting its established processes. The integrated system must be geared towards ensuring the below parameters, resting on the premise of industry-specific requirements, where speed is not merely a desirable attribute—it is the backbone of its operational and business model. The very essence of express cargo lies in its ability to ensure immediate release and delivery, catering to the time-sensitive demands

of shipper/consignee who pays premium charges for this service. Express is opted for speed irrespective of value, weight or type of product. Therefore, any infrastructural or operational modifications to the existing system must prioritize the preservation of speed and efficiency as non-negotiable parameters. Digitization is undeniably the cornerstone of trade facilitation; however, for the express industry, it must evolve into smart digitization—one that ensures uninterrupted 24x7x365 operations. The ECCS exemplifies this approach by maintaining structured downtime during lean periods and implementing system updates seamlessly in the background to avoid disrupting trade. Additionally, its dedicated support team is a critical feature that enables swift resolution of unforeseen issues, setting ECCS apart from other clearance systems and reinforcing its reliability.

This unified platform must be built with the express industry's operational imperatives at its heart. It must prioritize the immediate clearance of consignments and ensure that no element of the architecture or process disrupts the swift movement of goods. Additionally, the system should reflect India's ambitions under the Viksit Bharat mission, where the burgeoning e-commerce sector plays a central role in driving economic growth and transforming the country into a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047.

It is essential that the clearance processes reflect the unique operational requirements of each mode of cargo, including sea cargo, air cargo, land customs, express cargo, postal services, hand-carry shipments, and Inland Container Depots (ICDs). A one-size-fits-all approach risks oversimplifying these distinct operations, potentially compromising efficiency and increasing vulnerabilities. While the goal of creating a unified platform is critical, it must incorporate separate, well-defined modules designed to meet the specific needs of each mode of clearance. These specialized modules should then seamlessly converge into a centralized system for reporting and statistical analysis. By integrating common data elements while preserving the operational nuances of each module, the platform can strike the ideal balance between standardization, efficiency, and the flexibility needed to support India's diverse trade ecosystem.

The critical requirements highlighted below, thus must rest on this foundational premise, aiming to balance the necessity for speed. Ensuring that India's express cargo industry continues to thrive as a global leader in logistics and trade facilitation.

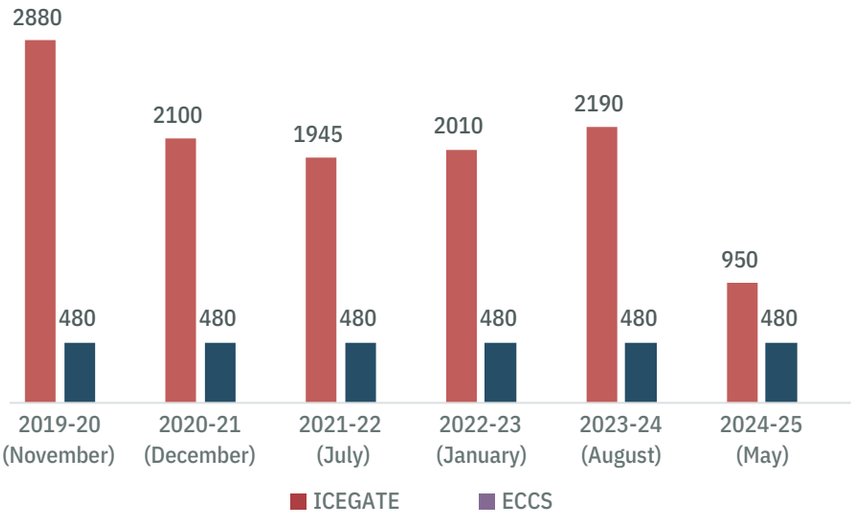
- **Provision for Bulk Filing and Bulk Output:** The ECCS, unlike the Indian Customs EDI System (ICES), allows for the filing of bulk declarations both for import and export. This feature enables users to file multiple clearance documents for import and export with a single click, saving valuable time—a key benefit for the express cargo industry. The ECCS also allows for the issuing of bulk Out of Charge (OOC) and Let Export Orders (LEO) which enhance the efficiency of the clearance process. Such processes should be retained and integrated into the new unified system to prevent the need for filing separately for each shipment (import/export). This approach is critical considering the volume of declarations that are filed daily at each port. The average number of express declarations filed per day is almost as high as 50,000.

By enabling the bulk upload of shipment data, ECCS has ensured operational efficiency, meeting the industry's high-speed requirements for expedited clearances and reduced turnaround times. Similarly, the ECCS has built-in the feature of issuing bulk LEOs and OOCs. To further facilitate the process, the ECCS allows for auto OOC upon duty payment. Similarly, auto LEO is also provided where shipments are not marked for examination. Retaining and integrating this feature into the new unified customs system is essential to maintain these gains, ensuring that the express industry continues to operate smoothly and efficiently, even as shipment volumes grow.

- **Barcode Scanning of Consignments:** Avoiding manual intervention and duplication of work with regards to transferring the data from one stakeholder to another, the current ECCS has developed the feature of integrating the data using hand-held devices such as barcode scanners for both imports and exports. The feature allows the Customs, custodians and courier companies to simply scan the barcode label on consignment and relevant data about the consignment (like arrival information) in the prescribed format is instantly captured into the ECCS which can process the information for further clearance process. This allows for speedy processing of the cargo whereby the documentation is not hindered by the physical movement of the consignment. This feature is both distinct and critical – distinct because it is not available with other customs clearance processes like sea, land, or air cargo and critical because marking a high volume of declarations manually would compromise the speed of the express clearance process.
- **Minimal Downtime:** This feature is essential for the seamless operation to avoid disruptions in the express cargo industry. Extended downtime, such as the 3-5 hours typical in ICES is unfeasible for express cargo due to its time-sensitive nature. A comparison of downtimes between ICES and ECCS clearly shows the efficiency of ECCS and planned downtimes. The average monthly downtime for ECCS is around 8 hrs (weekly 2 hrs) whilst in case of the ICES, the monthly downtime sometimes goes to as high as 48 hours. Extended downtimes, as observed in ICEGATE, create inefficiencies, disrupt time-sensitive clearances, and risk supply chain delays—challenges that are unfeasible for the express industry. Furthermore, during maintenance, the existing system often halts multiple processes simultaneously affecting critical activities like duty payments, declaration filing, and assessments. For instance, the ECL module's nightly 2.5-hour downtime during peak clearance hours results in delayed duty payments and hampers the clearance of dutiable shipments.

ECCS ensures **minimal scheduled** downtime

Downtime of ICEGATE and ECCS (in minutes)



To mitigate such challenges, the proposed system must adopt a modular design, ensuring independent functionality of different processes during maintenance. Scheduled updates for one module, such as duty payments, should not disrupt other essential activities like declaration filing. Additionally, allowing document uploads during downtime would prevent backlogs and ensure operational continuity.

As the express business model relies heavily on speed and efficiency, the new integrated system must ensure minimal disruptions to maintain operational continuity and timely deliveries. For instance, currently, ECL module is non-functional every night between 1100 pm to 0130 am (2 hours 30 minutes during peak courier clearances), therefore, ECCS users are not able to make duty payment and thus clearances of dutiable shipments get delayed.

- **24 x 7 Dedicated Help Desk:** The express industry in the true sense is a 24x7 operations industry. Therefore, the technical help for any sort of problems or glitches regarding the system needs immediate resolution. There is a critical need for a dedicated 24x7 help desk to ensure faster response and resolution times, addressing the time-sensitive needs of the express cargo industry. Due to the high volume of filings, a small technical fault in the system can halt the entire operation leading to the piling up of entire shipments which would result in time and financial losses.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) before rolling out reforms:** It is critical for the government with its technical teams to continuously engage with the stakeholders in the express industry to get suggestions and insights into the changes that are taking place within the ecosystem which would better equip them to respond to the change. With the proposed unified platform, the engagement becomes all the more important as there will be many changes that will be made in the ICES which are going to impact the express

industry. Further, in the case of technical/ digital reforms, it is critical to involve express industry stakeholders in the UAT stage to check for any customizations that may be needed. For example, in the recently adopted reforms, the duty payment through the ECL and e-payment of Voluntary Self-Initiated Payments (SIP), the development and implementation of the reform was carried out without any consultation with the express industry, and the impact is quite evident. In the case of ECL, the users are experiencing a daily downtime of 2.5 hrs as explained above. Similarly, in the case of e-voluntary SIP which replaces the manually filed TR -6 challan, the express industry is facing challenges in making the payment as the BoE input only accepts numeric values whereas the express industry uses an alpha-numeric BoE code. Such challenges could easily be avoided by involving all stakeholders in the process and also running a UAT with different applications within the customs clearance platform.

- **Establishing the Airway Bill (AWB) as a Common Reference Point for Seamless Operations:** The Airway Bill (AWB) serves as a critical common element in the express cargo ecosystem, acting as a universal marker for tracking consignments across all levels of operations. Unlike the Bill of Entry (BoE), which is accessible only to the Customs Department, the AWB is recognized and utilized by all custodians and stakeholders, including terminal clearing facilities, CBIC officials, and customs officers. Its widespread adoption ensures seamless coordination and communication across the supply chain. In the ECCS, the AWB is a pivotal reference point, offering a unified framework that simplifies interactions among stakeholders. As the AWB is already deeply integrated into existing processes, it allows for easy tracking and operational efficiency while eliminating redundancies caused by the limited accessibility of BoE data. Leveraging the AWB as the primary marker ensures consistency, transparency, and alignment of processes across stakeholders.

To maintain its effectiveness within the proposed unified customs platform, there must be a provision to establish the AWB as the principal reference point. This will enable custodians, customs officials, and other stakeholders to interact seamlessly with the express platform within the broader unified interface. Such integration will foster better collaboration, streamline processes, and ensure that the AWB remains a universally understood and accessible tracking tool, ultimately enhancing operational efficiency and transparency in the unified customs system.

5.

Key Recommendations from the Industry

Customs Integrated System

Criticalities and Key Recommendations for the Express Industry

I. Critical Requirements for the Express Industry in the Unified Platform

Design CIS for Express Clearances distinctly, aligned with WCO Immediate Release Guidelines

Bulk Filing & Bulk Output

Barcode Scanning for Seamless Data Transfer

Minimal Downtime for 24x7 Operations

24x7 Dedicated Help Desk

Stakeholder Consultation & User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

AWB as a Common Reference Point

Annual Fund Provision to Enable Upgrade of the Express Clearance System & Software

II. System-Related Recommendations

Enhancing Risk Management System (RMS)

Real-Time Data Integration with Regulatory Agencies

User-Friendly Dashboard for Insights

Exchange Rate Notification System

Integration of Export Incentives into Express Clearance

Two-Way Message Exchange for Issue Resolution

Automation of Form-1 for Imports

Increased Document Upload Capacity

End-to-end Digital Payments for Penalties & Duties

CCR for Imports Before Duty Payment

III. Regulatory Recommendations

Integration of SWIFT with Express Clearance

Simplified Re-import Process for Returned Goods

Customization of Faceless Customs for Express Cargo

Digitization of NOC for Uncleared Goods

Seamless Transfer Between Express & General Cargo

Revising Ceiling Values for CBE-XII & CBE-XIII

Allowing Amendments in Import/Export Declarations

Auto-Approval for Return to Origin (RTO)

Automating Flight Change Requests

Risk-Based Cargo Scanning for Efficient Clearance

Advance Filing of CBE without Flight Number and Date

Simplified KYC Validation Through OTP

Doing away with the need of Storing KYC Data for 5 years

This section outlines critical recommendations aimed at addressing operational inefficiencies and advancing the express cargo industry in India. These insights were developed through a comprehensive process that involved stakeholder interactions with key players from the industry, and regulatory and systems authorities. By conducting extensive fieldwork, including visits to major terminals and clearance facilities across India, we have identified specific challenges and gathered practical inputs to propose actionable recommendations for the CIS.

The recommendations provided here are not isolated observations but a well-rounded effort to incorporate perspectives from all relevant stakeholders. Each identified challenge is coupled with a corresponding recommendation to ensure clarity and provide a roadmap for implementation.

The focus is on bridging operational gaps, enhancing system efficiency, and aligning India's express cargo industry with global best practices to meet the growing demands of e-commerce and international trade.

These suggestions aim to strengthen the existing infrastructure, reduce trade barriers, and ensure that India's CIS is robust, future-ready, and capable of supporting the exponential growth of the express cargo industry. We have divided the recommendations into two sets – System related recommendations, that suggest reform in the proposed unified platform specific to the express industry and regulatory reforms that are aimed at making changes at the policy level to improve the clearance process. Below is the detailed analysis and recommendations tailored to the sector's needs.

5.1 System-related Recommendations

Improving the Risk Management System (RMS)

The RMS algorithm for the express clearance needs to be designed separately from the general cargo clearance. The current system, which relies on generic codes and static tags, must evolve to reflect dynamic risks accurately, enhancing overall efficiency and reducing unnecessary delays in clearance operations. An architecture that flags declarations based on a specific target percentage does not work well for the express industry. It might work for general cargo but not for express cargo owing to its high volume of declarations. Further, there needs to be a robust feedback loop mechanism in the RMS. Feedback from different ports should feed into a national RMS which can then evaluate the feedback and bring about requisite changes in the algorithm. Implementing a feedback mechanism within LRM (Local Risk Management) to share trends and insights with the NRM (National Risk Management), enabling consistent application across ports. This will reduce false flags by identifying and resolving recurring issues with flagged

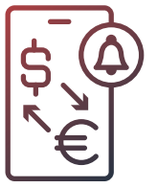
terms or labels, ultimately streamlining the clearance process. This transition will minimize loopholes, prevent port hopping, and address mismatches in risk-related information. For example, if at a port, the LRM has observed a particular trend of duty evasion or any other way of going around the rules, it should flag it and refer it to the national RMS so that other LRMs can also learn from it and apply a refined tag at other ports. Additionally, if the LRM learns that a particular word or label is getting falsely flagged time and again, like in the cases of metal shipments, it should give back feedback which should be sorted so that such consignments are not stopped unnecessarily thereby speeding up the process.

Addressing Data Transmission Errors with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Resolve data transmission errors to RBI for IDPMS (Import Data Processing and Monitoring System) and EDPMS (Export Data Processing and Monitoring System) by improving the acceptance and validation of XML files to prevent rejections due to input errors. Streamlining the process to eliminate delays caused by re-uploading missing values is therefore critical. Additionally, ensuring that Bills of Entry (BoEs) are accurately reflected in RBI records when data is submitted for GST payments by optimizing the data flow between Customs and the RBI systems particularly for EDPMS, where shipping bills are currently not reflected. Such discrepancies result in mismatches that not only disrupt trade operations but also tarnish the perception of India's digitization efforts. Ensuring seamless data integration between these systems will enhance efficiency, reduce operational delays, and strengthen India's trade ecosystem by fostering trust and reliability among stakeholders.

Creating a User-Friendly Data Dashboard

Establish a unified, cumulative data dashboard accessible to users. This feature would enable seamless extraction of reports, access to archival data, and real-time insights. Additionally, the dashboard should support report generation at both operational (ground) and strategic (regulatory) levels for Customs officers, enhancing decision-making and ensuring transparency across the system. Further consultations on the specific requirements of the data dashboard are recommended to be carried out and customizations to it must be pursued accordingly.



Developing an Exchange Rate Notification Mechanism

In the current system, the exchange rate notifications are sometimes delayed resulting in delays in the payment of duty. To address these challenges, it is recommended to integrate a real-time notification feature in the proposed unified express clearance platform. This would immediately alert users of exchange rate updates, enabling traders to ensure accurate declarations, maintain valuation consistency, and facilitate prompt payment adjustments, thus reducing delays and inefficiencies. Such a system would address a key industry requirement, ensuring smoother trade operations and compliance with regulatory standards.

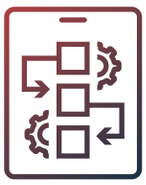
Linking Incentives and Duty-drawbacks related to Government Schemes

Currently, various incentives linked to export schemes, such as duty drawback, RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products), and RoSCTL (Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies), cannot be processed efficiently on ECCS due to missing linkages. This prevents traders from fully availing benefits and creates inefficiencies in the process. To address this gap, the new unified system must incorporate functionalities to seamlessly handle such operations. On the ground, the issue has been managed by providing the shippers, who seek scheme-related benefits, an option to file in the ICEGATE whilst other bills can be filed in the ECCS. Meanwhile, custodians at ICTs must register on ICEGATE for handling export goods and exchanging custodian-related messages. Although the logistical infrastructure of ICTs is used for the physical handling and examination of goods, the customs clearance process remains divided between ECCS and ICES, leading to inefficiencies. To streamline this process, the new integrated system should be designed to unify the handling of export benefit schemes within a single portal. This would involve integrating incentive-related functionalities directly for express cargo users, allowing them to process claims without switching platforms. In the existing architecture, since express cargo users avail export benefits from ICEGATE, features like bulk uploading are absent. This disrupts the processing of express cargo, as bulk uploading is an essential requirement for the industry.

Realtime message exchange between the express clearance system and the Trade

Provision for real-time 2-way message exchange between the CIS and courier/custodian systems needs to be developed for seamless operations and data transfer to enable quick and accurate updates on the shipment

status. Since the express industry is time-sensitive, there will be many situations/challenges that will need prompt action or priority treatment. A 2-way message exchange system would allow the operators to escalate certain matters that might need priority attention or response and subsequently allow the regulators to address these issues. The message exchange system will also digitalize the entire clearance process through the seamless, accurate, and timely flow of data & information among the stakeholders. It will not only improve compliance and enhance speed but will also provide accurate and timely visibility to importers/exporters, thereby reducing queries and escalations.



Digitization and Automation of Form-1 for Imports

After the filing of IGM and ECM, when the cargo arrives at the terminal, a physical copy of the consignment information is required from the airlines as form-1. Kindly note that this information has already been submitted into ICEGATE as IGM. However, this information is not available in ECCS therefore airlines share a physical copy of this form which contains information on the number of consignments, its weight, and which courier company it belongs to. This challenge arises purely because the clearance process involves two platforms that do not interact with each other. In order to overcome this challenge, the new system must have provisions where all the stakeholders in the clearance process interact with only one system which would automate the data sharing.

Digitization of Payments Other than Duty

The existing processes for penalty, interest, and redemption payments under the current system remain partially manual and inefficient, highlighting the need for a more streamlined and automated solution. While the introduction of the Electronic Cash Ledger (ECL) after the launch of the ECCS was a step forward, its limitations have posed significant challenges for the express industry. Presently, ECL only facilitates duty payments, leaving penalties, interest, and redemptions outside its scope. Additionally, duty payments often involve a manual process resulting in unavoidable delays. Another issue arises between 11 PM and 12:30 AM when the ECL is unavailable due to routine maintenance, disrupting critical operations in the express cargo industry, which operates 24x7 and handles a majority of flights during nighttime hours. To address these issues, the proposed unified system must integrate a single platform for both penalty and duty payments. By eliminating manual interventions and enabling real-time online payments, this digitization effort would significantly expedite the payment process.

Upgrading Document Size for Uploading

The file size of attachments needs to be increased. Currently, a file size of a maximum of 2 MB can only be uploaded. If the attachment is larger and has 4-5 pages, then manual scanning is required, which delays the process.

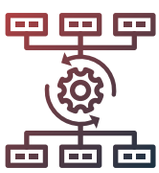
CCR for Imports should be Before Duty Payment

The Compulsory Compliance Requirement (CCR) step for express imports should be kept before duty payment. The CCR, which is an additional compliance requirement for specific BoEs that require additional information other than what is provided at the time of filing the BoE, in the ICES is usually done after the duty payment, which delays the release of the consignment. In the case of express, it is recommended that the CCR be done before the duty payment to facilitate the speedy clearance of the cargo.

5.2 Regulatory Recommendations

SWIFT Integration with the Express Clearance Platform

Integrate Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade (SWIFT) with the express industry digital platform to expand the ambit of consignments that can be cleared through express. Currently, the SWIFT is not integrated with the ECCS therefore not allowing the express industry to clear the consignments where Partner Government Agency (PGA) clearances are required. This impacts the express sector in two ways - firstly, it limits the scope of express industry growth by taking away a sizeable consignment category that can be cleared through express, secondly, it delays the current process as the consignment as well as the documentation needs to be transferred to the air cargo which involves dedicating staff, finances and above all time for this process.



Not Treating Returned Goods as Imports

The current process treats returned goods as new imports, requiring clearance, and involving multiple intermediaries. This leads to delays due to repeated steps including filing detailed documentation, undergoing inspections, and paying applicable duties, even though the goods originated from India. Such procedures not only delay the return process but also increase costs for the exporter. To address these challenges, it's essential to implement a streamlined re-import mechanism that recognizes returned

goods as distinct from new imports, allowing for expedited clearance processes. For instance, under Section 20 of the Customs Act, of 1962, provisions exist for the re-importation of goods exported for specific purposes, such as repairs and defective pieces. The reform needs to be supported by a complimentary feature in the new unified system that has provision for the return of goods, therefore, simplifying the process. This reform is particularly vital for India's e-commerce sector, where return rates currently stand between 25-40%, a figure higher than the global average. Such a high volume of returns underscores the need for an efficient return mechanism as an integral part of the logistics chain.

Risk-based Scanning of the Cargo

In the current clearance process of express cargo, all the import or export consignments are subjected to 100% X-ray scanning that renders facilitation and AEO programs redundant. Further, it adds to delays as facilitated cargo gets delayed owing to scanning. Through the customs circular no. 23 of 2016 (Annexure-I), 100% scanning was introduced as an examination norm, however, the same circular prescribed this norm till the time automated system in installed. Now that the automated system is operational, risk-based scanning should replace the 100% scanning. This would also allow customs officials at the terminal to use their time more efficiently as they can prioritize the RMS-flagged consignment and examine the cargo upon its arrival rather than waiting for all the consignments to be scanned first. This reform would significantly reduce the burden of Customs officials as the facilitated percentage of CBEs stands around 90% as per the recent National Time Release Study of 2024 conducted by the CBIC.

Comparison of X-Ray Screening

	India	Hong Kong	Japan	Vietnam	Australia
LPI Ranking (2023)	38	7	13	43	19
Cost of logistic (% of GDP)	14	N/A	8	17	8.6
100 % X-ray screening by customs	Yes	No	No	No	No
X-Ray machine Provided by	Custodians	Customs	Customs	Custodian or Customs	Customs
Primary reason for Screening-Customs enforcement	Preventing smuggling, misdeclaration	Risk-based approach	Risk-based approach	Risk-based approach	Risk-based approach

Source: World Bank, Experts Inputs

Customization in the Faceless Customs Program

Faceless customs, which is a key feature of the Turant Customs initiative, designed to make the clearance process, transparent, paperless and seamless needs some customizations with regard to the express clearance process. In the current process, the express industry is experiencing delays in the clearance and also the lack of a message exchange doesn't allow them to follow up with the regulators on specific time-sensitive issues. For example, in an event where the courier operators require a consignment lot to be taken on priority by customs owing to time sensitivity, that feature is not available in the current framework. Before the faceless customs was launched, the courier operators interacted with the concerned customs office to expedite such exigencies. In the present situation a feature of message exchange is needed otherwise the faceless initiative is harming the express industry.

Digitizing No Objection Certificates (NOC) for Disposal of Unclaimed Goods

Under Section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962, custodians are authorized to dispose of unclaimed or uncleared goods that remain uncleared for over 30 days. This disposal often requires obtaining a NOC from various agencies, including state pollution control boards and other regulators, which are not integrated into systems like SWIFT or ECCS. Currently, custodians must manually liaise with each agency to secure the necessary NOCs, leading to delays and inefficiencies. Existing challenges like the time-consuming NOC acquisition process can lead to congestion at clearance facilities, as unclaimed goods accumulate adding costs & delays in the overall process as well as associated safety risks of certain goods like perishables or hazardous items that pose significant safety hazards at terminals. By digitizing and automating NOC requests and approvals, custodians can obtain necessary clearances more swiftly, ensuring timely disposal of unclaimed goods. Implementing a digitized, time-bound NOC system aligns with modern trade facilitation goals, promoting a more efficient and secure logistics environment that will further maintain 'express' efficiency for the CEP industry.

Eliminating Fresh Filing Requirement for Transfer of Shipments from Express to Air Cargo

In the unified system, there is a need to eliminate the requirement for fresh filing when shipments are transferred from express to air cargo for clearance. Currently, if express cargo is redirected through traditional cargo routes for various reasons, fresh filing of documents is mandatory. Thus, introducing a mechanism to automatically update and transfer existing documentation during such transitions, streamlining processes, and reducing delays would help the overall clearance process.

Upgrading Ceiling Value for CBE-XII and CBE XIII Consignments

The current valuation ceiling for CB-XIII consignments—categorized as low-value dutiable imports—is set at INR 1 lakh. This threshold was established in 2010 when the exchange rate was approximately 1 USD = INR 46. At that time, the ceiling equated to about USD 2,174. Since then, the Indian Rupee has depreciated against the U.S. Dollar, with the exchange rate reaching around 1 USD = INR 84.31. Consequently, the same INR 1 lakh now equates to approximately USD 1,186, effectively reducing the permissible value of consignments by 45% in dollar terms. In dollar terms, even if we use the 2010 ceiling values, the current value should be around INR 1.83 lac highlighting a massive opportunity loss for the express industry. This ceiling poses challenges for the courier industry, limiting the value of goods that can be transported under the CB-XIII category and necessitating more complex clearance procedures for higher-value consignments. Additionally, for CBE XII (samples), the value limit must be increased from INR 10,000, set in the 1990s, to INR 25,000 to reflect current economic realities. To align with current exchange rates and facilitate smoother operations, it's imperative to revisit and adjust the CB-XII and CBE XIII valuation ceiling. This reform will enable customers to avail express services for a larger group of consignments thereby amplifying the volume growth of the industry.

Reforming the Declaration Amendment Procedure

Introduce provisions allowing courier companies and custodians to make necessary amendments to inputs both pre- and post-exit, rather than restricting this capability solely to the regulatory front end (CBIC). This reform will streamline the process, reduce delays, and empower stakeholders to address errors or changes more efficiently. Amendments are particularly critical in scenarios involving short landing and excess landing consignments. Short landing occurs when the quantity of goods is less

than what was declared, while excess landing refers to goods exceeding the declared quantity. Currently, the existing feature only allows making amendments from the front end (CBIC), which causes delays in relaying information from the back end (onsite agent at the terminal) to the front end. Hence, introducing a mechanism for courier companies and custodians to amend such discrepancies directly—both pre- and post-exit—would streamline the process, reduce bottlenecks, and ensure accurate reporting, ultimately supporting smoother operations and enhanced trade facilitation.

Auto-Approval for Return to Origin

Aligning with international best practices, it is proposed to introduce an automated approval process for Return to Origin (RTO) shipments that are not cleared within seven days of arrival. This system would enable the automatic return of goods through the online portal if a Courier Bill of Entry (CBE) is not filed within this timeframe. Automating the RTO process would significantly streamline the disposal procedure, free up valuable warehouse space, and ensure compliance with environmental and regulatory standards. Currently, the RTO process is cumbersome and time-intensive, often taking a minimum of 15 days to complete. The manual procedure requires the shipper to file and submit a letter explaining the reason for not filing a CBE, leading to delays in the workings of the process that can be avoided to facilitate a streamlined process. These prolonged timelines result in overcrowding at warehousing facilities and limit the terminal's capacity to handle additional cargo volumes. By automating the RTO process, shipments can be seamlessly approved for return without unnecessary delays, thereby optimizing space utilization in terminals. This enhancement would not only improve operational efficiency but also support the handling of higher cargo volumes in the future, aligning with the growing demands of the express cargo industry.

Reform for Flight Change Requests

Under current regulations, altering a shipment's assigned flight number is generally prohibited, even when unforeseen circumstances—such as flight delays, cancellations, or capacity constraints—necessitate changes to ensure timely delivery. The existing process for a flight change request is manual and requires approval from the local customs officer, adding unnecessary delays to the process. These requests are often made in cases where the designated flight is fully booked, delayed, or cancelled, or when expedited delivery is required for time-sensitive shipments. To address these challenges, it is recommended that the customs framework incorporate automated

provisions for flight change requests under special circumstances. Furthermore, to expedite the clearance process, flight details should not be a mandatory part of shipping bills. Instead, flight details can be submitted at the final stage, after the consignment has been cleared. This flexibility would enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of the logistics chain, ensuring smooth operations for the express cargo industry and minimizing disruptions caused by flight-related contingencies.

Doing away with Re-weighing of the Export-bound Cargo

All export-bound consignments are subjected to weighing upon arrival at the terminal even though the cargo has been weighed and the data already shared with the regulators. Such processes lead to delays, especially when data about the weight of the cargo is already declared by the shipper which is the requirement for the regulators as far as the clearance process is concerned.

Simplifying and Promoting Advance Filing of CBE

Advance filing of import declarations should be allowed without mandating the entry of flight numbers at the time of filing. There needs to be a provision where flight details can be added or edited after filing CBE. This will promote advance filing and ease clearance timelines. Necessitating flight numbers during filing leads to delays in filing because, for a long-haul flight that stops at multiple destinations before taking off for India, the flight details may change. Therefore, in order to be sure about the flight details, the couriers delay filing BoE till the time the flight has left the pen-ultimate destination so that correct flight details can be entered. Currently, import declarations are only filed after the flight departs from the penultimate destination. For example, if a flight from the US to India stops in Amsterdam and Dubai, the declaration can only be filed after the flight departs from Dubai. Allowing declarations to be filed with a provision of adding when the flight departs from its origin, such as the US in this example, would provide courier providers and customs officials sufficient time to process and clear cargo, ensuring readiness for immediate clearance upon arrival. Notably, this facility is already available for general air cargo, which is less time-sensitive than express cargo. The industry considers the flight number requirement redundant for the initial declaration process. Instead, the industry proposes that flight numbers can be provided later and shared with regulators after filing the CBE in imports and after LEO generation in case of exports. This change would eliminate unnecessary bottlenecks, allowing smoother and faster export processing, crucial for maintaining the efficiency of express operations.

Simplifying the KYC Validation

The Express industry has a unique feature where there are individual imports or exporters, unlike other trade modes like sea, land, etc. This feature gives rise to the unique challenge of having new importers/exporters whose details are not available in the system. To overcome this challenge, the customs have authorized the couriers to collect the KYC details for shipments coming from or going to individuals. The current system, therefore, has evolved into a process where the customs issues OOC or LEO accepting that the courier has carried out the KYC, and in case there is a problem, the courier becomes liable. However, validating customers' KYC documents is often a time-consuming process for courier companies, frequently delayed by customers' slow responses. These delays not only hinder the timely movement of the cargo but also lead to the accumulation of undelivered consignments at terminals, exacerbating the issue of overcrowded facilities. To address this, the industry proposes that since the information about the shipper is already mentioned in the documentation like physical address, and mobile numbers, and since AADHAR details are linked to phone numbers, there needs to be a way to get these details to simplify the KYC process. A mechanism that uses One-Time Password (OTP) verification can be a game-changer in such a scenario. By leveraging the linkage between mobile numbers and KYC documents like Aadhaar, courier companies can send OTPs to customers' registered mobile numbers. Successful OTP verification would swiftly confirm the customer's identity, bypassing the need for manual document validation. This approach not only streamlines the KYC process but also prevents holding a significant volume of cargo at the terminals. Further, traders who have a valid Import Export Code (IEC), should be exempted from the KYC process.

Doing away with Storing KYC Data for 5 years: Currently, there is a practice of storing the KYC details of traders for 5 years. Keeping KYC records for 5 years, especially for individuals could be a violation of Digital Personal Data Protection. Therefore, KYC data storage needs to be reviewed. One suggestion is to do away with the need for maintaining KYC records with the operators. KYC information collection, collation, and storage, if any, must happen on the Government/CBIC sites.

The recommendations outlined above are critical for streamlining clearance processes and enhancing the efficiency of the express cargo industry. They address key operational and regulatory challenges while ensuring alignment with global trade facilitation goals. It is important to acknowledge that the existing digital architecture, including the ECCS, has been built around specific regulations that govern express cargo

clearance. Over time, stakeholders have developed systems and processes that complement the ECCS framework, allowing for operational consistency and efficiency.

Therefore, while it is crucial to integrate new features and technological advancements into the proposed unified CIS, it is imperative to preserve the core functionalities that define the unique characteristics of the express cargo industry, such as rapid clearance processes and operational efficiency. The essence of the 'express' industry lies in its ability to provide fast, time-sensitive deliveries, which cannot be compromised. Any substantial deviation from the established framework could require stakeholders to implement widespread changes to their systems, potentially disrupting operations and creating inefficiencies in the industry.

Additionally, the cargo industry—both traditional and express—plays a pivotal role in India's economic aspirations. It is instrumental in supporting the country's vision of achieving Viksit Bharat and becoming a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047. With this background, the recommendations provided aim to balance the needs of both sectors. They propose enhancements that maintain the express industry's agility while addressing challenges that affect the broader cargo ecosystem, ensuring that both traditional and express cargo industries contribute meaningfully to India's economic growth.

By maintaining the integrity of current processes and introducing innovative, scalable improvements, the proposed system can address pressing challenges without causing unnecessary disruptions. These reforms will not only ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of the express cargo industry but also bolster India's position as a global leader in e-commerce, logistics, and international trade.

Annexure -I

Circular No. 23/ 2006-Cus

F.No.450/96/2006-Cus. IV

Government of India

Ministry of Finance

Department of Revenue

{Central Board of Excise & Customs}

***

New Delhi, dated the 25th August,2006

Subject: Examination norms concerning import & export through courier mode-regarding-

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The undersigned is directed to invite your kind attention towards the issues raised by Express Industry Council of India (EICI) on the difficulties being faced by them in clearances of courier consignments from export & import through courier mode. While the Board is considering suitable amendments in Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998, EICI has informed about the divergent examination practices being followed at different Customs locations.

2. Board has examined the issue. The automation project for clearance of courier consignment is under progress. Under the automated process the consignments would be identified for examination on the basis of 'risk analysis'. However, till such time automated system is installed, manual examination norms are necessary. Following examination norms are provided for import and export of Courier consignments,-

(a) 100% screening of import/ export consignments (documents and all types of cargo) required to be done through X-ray or other NII techniques. Wherever possible the facility of X-ray machines available with Customs could be used; otherwise the airlines or AAI's screening facility may be resorted to for such screening. Further wherever feasible such screening by multi-agencies could be combined to reduce the time taken and avoid duplicity.

(b) Physical examination of export documents (covered by customs declarations CBEx-I and CSB-I), gifts, samples and export goods (covered by customs declarations CBEx-II, CSB-II,) limited upto a maximum of 10%of the total courier consignments or specific intelligence. The consignments so selected to be examined 100%.

(c) Physical examination of import documents (covered under customs declarations CBE-III, CBE-VIII), gifts, samples (covered under customs declarations CBE-IV, CBE-IX) and dutiable goods (covered under customs declarations CBE-V, CBE-X) limited upto a maximum of 10% of the total courier consignments. The consignments so selected to be examined 100%.

(d) Selection of consignments for (b) & (c) above would be based on the various parameters such as nature of goods, value, weight, status of importer etc.

(e) However the Commissioner of Customs in respective port can exercise the discretion of random examination of goods, on specific parameter such as country of import/export, nature of goods as presently provided in the present EDI System.

3. Notwithstanding anything contained above, any consignment can be examined by the Customs (even upto 100% examination), if there is any specific intelligence or there is doubt during X-ray in respect of the said consignment.

4. These instructions may be brought to the notice of all concerned by way of issuance of suitable Standing Orders.

5. Difficulties, if any in implementation of these instructions, may be brought to the notice of the Board. Kindly acknowledge receipt of this Circular.

About EICI

Express Industry Council of India is the apex industry association representing leading international and domestic express companies in India. EICI is a key driver of policies impacting the express industry and aims to create a favourable business environment for the users of the express industry. EICI jointly with Indian Customs had successfully developed a state-of-the-art electronic Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS) for Customs clearance of express shipments in India. This has increased India's global competitiveness and led to Ease of Doing Business in a paperless environment. EICI as a trade facilitation initiative, operates the common user international express terminals at Delhi airport for the benefit of India's exporters and importers. EICI is also part of the CII Logistics Skill Council which aims to upskill for the manpower requirements of the industry.

About BRIEF

Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF) is a research-based policy think tank with focus on policy research, diagnostic studies, program implementation, industry and market research as well as assessment of various schemes and interventions in the socio-economic domain. BRIEF functions as a research partner to policymakers, decision making bodies, corporate entities, research institutions and the academia, providing extensive research-based advisory on contemporary issues. BRIEF envisages the enhancement of knowledge content in policy making by undertaking analytical research targeted towards improving India's interface with the global economy.

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