

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme

(a) Based upon WCO's SAFE Framework of Standards (FoS), 'Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme' has been developed by Indian Customs to enable business involved in the international trade to reap the following benefits:

- (i) Secure supply chain from point of export to import;
- (ii) Ability to demonstrate compliance with security standards when contracting to supply overseas importers / exporters;
- (iii) Enhanced border clearance privileges in Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) partner countries;
- (iv) Minimal disruption to flow of cargo after a security related disruption;
- (v) Reduction in dwell time and related costs; and
- (vi) Customs advice / assistance if trade faces unexpected issues with Customs of countries with which India have MRA.

(b) The AEO programmes have been implemented by other Customs administrations that give AEO status holders preferential Customs treatment in terms of reduced examination, faster clearances and other benefits. Thus, the AEO programme is expected to result in Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) with these Customs administrations. MRAs would ensure export goods get due Customs facilitation at the point of entry in the foreign country. Apart from securing supply chain, the benefits include reduction in dwell time and consequent cost of doing business. Indian Customs has signed MRA with Hong Kong Customs to recognise respective AEO Programmes to enable trade to get benefits on reciprocal basis. Indian Customs is also engaged in finalising MRA with other countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, USA etc.

(c) As a step further towards trust based compliance, Indian Customs has introduced the new/revamped Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme wherein extensive benefits, including greater facilitation and self-certification, have been provided to those entities who have demonstrated internal strong control system

and compliance with CBEC.