



Customs convened a meeting of the Pilot Partners of the new Accredited Client Program on 28 June to discuss the import and export process flows for Accredited Clients and the data elements that will be required on the Request for Cargo Release (RCR) and Periodic Declaration (PD).

Detailed below are the main points arising from the meeting.

CARGO PROFILES

During Customs presentation of the Import Process flow it was noted by Customs that cargo could still be subject to a Customs hold. The Partners asked how this could be when one of the benefits of ACP was supposed to be automatic release. Customs explained that it would relate to a profile on the forwarders cargo report not the Partners RCR. The Partners asked under what circumstances profiles would be put on cargo reports and that they should be overridden for Accredited Clients. Customs undertook to establish what type of profiles are put on Cargo reports and advise the Partners.

AQIS FIELDS

The Partners raised the issue as to why specific information regarding AQIS issues were required to be put on the RCR. The Partners understood that all AQIS issues would be agreed under the Client Contract with Customs. AQIS explained that it was needed for them to monitor treatment being performed. They advised that the normal process would be agreed under the Contract and the RCR information would only be required when the goods did not meet the agreed Contract criteria and needed treatment accordingly.

WEIGHTS

Significant discussion with ABS resulted from the requirement to report weight per tariff line. The Partners advised that the information was not available and could not be reported accurately. ABS advised that all they did now was to take the consignment weight on an entry and apply it to the first tariff line on an entry and

therefore an educated guess would be sufficient. The Partners advised that this would need to be included in the Contract given the current emphasis on compliance. ABS agreed to review whether the weight could be obtained elsewhere or could be provided as a total figure only.

TIME FOR LODGEMENT

The Working Group recommendation that the time for lodgement of the Import Periodic declaration be extended from the current 1st working day of the following month to within 7 days of the end of the month has been accepted by all parties and has been sent to the Minister for ratification. It is expected that this will be ratified shortly. This applies to Import PD's only. Customs will make the same recommendation on Export PD's which will be required to be a separate decision.

STATE of ORIGIN

Significant discussion arose from the ABS requirement to report the State of manufacture of Australian produced goods on the Export PD. The Partners advised that their commercial systems did not track that information and that it was impossible to be compliant with that requirement. The ABS advised that State Governments required the information and therefore the requirement for the information could not be waived. The Partners will put case studies to ABS who will issue guidelines as to how exporters can comply with this requirement.



COUNTRY of ORIGIN (Exports)

One of the data elements that appeared on the Export PD was the Country of Origin of the goods where the goods were declared as being of foreign origin. The Partners pointed out that this was not a current requirement and like the State of Origin was essentially impossible to trace. Customs advised that this requirement results from a WTO data requirement which will apply to all export declarations.

PERMIT GOODS IN SCOPE

It has been previously stated that goods requiring permits for export would be out of scope for the ACP. Customs advised that permit goods may be in scope if the Permit Issuing Authority agrees. Negotiation of permit goods will be required on a case by case basis.

DUTY DEFERRAL

The question of Duty deferral is still with Treasury. Treasury will determine whether all importers will get duty deferral, whether only Accredited clients get duty deferral or whether there will be no duty deferral. Customs are working with treasury to finalise a decision on this issue.

COST RECOVERY

The final cost recovery charges for Accredited Clients are still to be determined. Customs advised that they did not expect them to vary significantly from the indicative cost recovery charges previously issued. These charges will be calculated by Customs based on the number of RCR's submitted on the PD. They will then raise a billing that will include the cost recovery charges and the duty owing on the PD.

BACKGROUND - ACCREDITED CLIENT PROGRAM

The Accredited Client Program is a new program developed by Customs that provides a range of benefits for traders that have a demonstrable history of providing accurate and timely information to Customs. The benefits include Periodic rather than transactional customs entries, the provision of minimum data at the time of import or export, an alternate cost recovery model for imports and duty deferral for importers.

The Accredited Client Program for Exporters is due to be introduced in November 2003 and for Importers, March 2004.

TCF TRADE MANAGEMENT

TCF is participating in the "pilot" program that is operating in advance of the formal establishment of the ACP. We are already familiar with the Government's requirements and intent, and have identified a range of solutions for those companies willing to stand up to the new Customs environment for business.

The boundaries of ACP are sufficiently flexible that they can be tailored to the needs of each participant. TCF staff know, through their participation in the 'pilot' program, that each company's needs will be unique and will require considerable analysis and synthesis to ascertain how to re-engineer international trade processes to maximize the savings on offer.