



**SINGAPORE
CUSTOMS**

MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

21 May 2025

CERTIFIED COMPANIES TO ENJOY FASTER CLEARANCE FOR GOODS TRADED BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND INDIA

Singapore, 21 May 2025 – Singapore and India have signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) of Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programmes on 20 May 2025, marking a key milestone in bilateral trade facilitation. The MRA enables certified AEO companies in both countries to benefit from expedited customs clearance, with reduced documentation checks and cargo inspections when exporting goods to each other.

2 The MRA was signed by Mr Tan Hung Hooi, Director-General, Singapore Customs, and Mr Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) of India. The signing took place on the sidelines of the 26th World Customs Organisation (WCO) Asia/Pacific (A/P) Regional Heads of Customs Administrations (RHCA) Conference held in Hong Kong, China.

3 “India and Singapore have always shared strong trade and economic ties, and India remains one of Singapore’s largest trading partners,” said Mr Tan Hung Hooi. “The India-Singapore AEO-MRA reflects our shared commitment to enhancing supply chain security while improving trade efficiency. We invite more businesses in Singapore to

come on board our Secure Trade Partnership - Plus (STP-Plus) programme and take advantage of the benefits offered under our network of trusted trade partners.”

4 Mr Sanjay Kumar Agarwal added, “The signing of the India-Singapore AEO Mutual Recognition Arrangement marks an important milestone in CBIC’s unwavering commitment to promoting trusted trade and enhancing supply chain security. This partnership reflects our dedication to facilitating legitimate trade while ensuring global customs cooperation at the highest standards.”

5 The India-Singapore AEO MRA recognises the compatibility of both countries’ supply chain security regime. Companies certified under Singapore Customs’ STP-Plus programme (see Annex A) and India’s AEO programme are recognised as low-risk and can benefit from simplified customs procedures when exporting goods to each other.

6 One of the companies in Singapore with significant trade with India welcomed the signing of the MRA. “As an AEO-certified entity, we are confident that this MRA will bring substantial operational and strategic benefits to businesses engaged in cross-border trade. The key advantages from our company’s perspective include faster and predictable customs clearance, lower operational costs, enhanced supply chain security and stronger competitive advantage,” said Mr Ralph Borinaga, Transport, Trade and Compliance Manager and Ms Harizah Tasri, Head of Arvato Singapore Pte Ltd.

7 Between 2022 and 2024, Singapore’s total trade with India averaged S\$30.5 billion annually.

Annex A: Background on Singapore Customs’ Secure Trade Partnership Programme and Mutual Recognition Arrangements

Annex B: Photographs

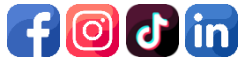
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About Singapore Customs

Singapore Customs protects revenue and facilitates trade for Singapore's economic growth while continuously striving to be a world-leading customs authority. As a partner of the Ministry of Finance, we ensure compliance with customs and tax regulations, safeguard the nation's financial interests, and combat illicit trade activities. We also enable seamless trade by simplifying customs processes, building global trade connectivity, and maintaining Singapore's position as a trusted global trading hub. Guided by our values of integrity, commitment, courage, responsiveness and teamwork, we strive for excellence with a professional and innovative team. Together, we ensure revenue and enable trade, fostering a thriving Singapore economy.

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ANNEX A

Background on Singapore Customs' Secure Trade Partnership Programme and Mutual Recognition Arrangements

Singapore Customs' Secure Trade Partnership (STP) programme is based on the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE Framework of Standards).

The Framework highlights the need for all stakeholders to take measures to ensure the security of the supply chain, and for customs administrations to establish Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programmes to certify companies which adopt robust security practices.

Companies with higher security measures in place will be eligible for STP-Plus. They will also receive additional facilitation through the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) with our partners.

To date, 84 companies are certified as AEOs by Singapore Customs under the STP-Plus.

MRAs multiply the benefits of national AEO programmes by elevating trade facilitation and trade security to the international level. Such arrangements also help to facilitate continuous secure trade flows in situations of high alert or when international trade is disrupted.

Singapore Customs is the first customs administration in Southeast Asia to enter into mutual recognition of AEO programmes with other customs administrations. To date, it has signed MRAs with 13 customs administrations: Canada, Republic of Korea, Japan, People's Republic of China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, the United States, Australia, Thailand, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Malaysia and India; as well as the regional ASEAN AEO MRA.

ANNEX B – Photographs



Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs of India's Chairman, Mr Sanjay Kumar Agarwal (left), and Singapore Customs' Director-General, Mr Tan Hung Hooi (right), at the signing ceremony.



Singapore Customs Delegation:

Singapore Customs' Director-General, Mr Tan Hung Hooi (fourth from the right)

Deputy Head International Relations, Mr Sean Ng (third from the right)

Assistant Head International Relations, Ms Esther Ng (second from the right)

Senior International Relations Officer, Ms Dionnis Chua (first from the right)

CBIC Delegation:

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs of India's Chairman, Mr Sanjay Kumar Agarwal (third from the left)

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs of India's Joint Secretary (Customs), Mr Anupam Prakash (second from the left)

Consulate General of India, Hong Kong's Consul, Ms Deepti Perumal (first from the left)