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From Regulation to Partnership: Transforming Trade Facilitation with TradeFIRST

Launched on 26 January 2011, TradeFIRST is Singapore Customs' latest initiative in improving trade facilitation through better partnership with businesses. A single, holistic framework that integrates facilitation, compliance and risk management, TradeFIRST promises to make trade easier, fairer and more secure.

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A Warehouse By Any Other Name: Customs' Innovative Business Solution

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inSIGHT

As part of our mission to ensure that trade remains easy, fair and secure, Singapore Customs has to constantly innovate and sometimes, to profoundly transform the way things are done. This mission, embodying a commitment to excellence and service, is the cornerstone of our recently launched TradeFIRST initiative.

TradeFIRST presents exciting opportunities for all of us. Businesses immediately benefit from a more streamlined process and we are now better positioned to focus on, understand and respond to the needs of the trading community. Your support has launched 2011 to a promising start. We look forward to working closely with you.

PATRICIA BAY
Editor

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Patricia Bay (Editor) | Lynn Ng | Victor Seah

DESIGN BY

Green House Design + Communications

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From Regulation to Partnership: Transforming Trade Facilitation with TradeFIRST

Launched on 26 January 2011, TradeFIRST is Singapore Customs' latest initiative in improving trade facilitation through better partnership with businesses. A single, holistic framework that integrates facilitation, compliance and risk management, TradeFIRST promises to make trade easier, fairer and more secure.



TradeFIRST was officially launched by (from left) Director-General of Customs Mr Fong Yong Kian, Permanent Secretary for Finance Mr Peter Ong, and Chief Executive of the Singapore Business Federation Mr Teng Theng Dar on International Customs Day 2011.

For Singapore Customs, finding a flexible and responsive approach that serves business needs has been key to balancing its twin roles of facilitating trade and ensuring the integrity of the trading system.

Recognising the increasing challenges faced by businesses and traders, such as the growing complexities and inter-dependencies of supply

chains, Singapore Customs sought to strengthen and enhance the relationship between Customs and the trading community even further.

Reviewing existing transactions and relationships with businesses and traders, Singapore Customs found that despite the many facilitation schemes available in the existing system, companies were not always aware of them.

“We had in mind the goal of making Singapore Customs more responsive, more flexible, and better able to offer customised solutions to businesses, but not at the expense of a higher level of risk or non-compliance,” explained Mr Fong Yong Kian, Director-General of Singapore Customs.

A new approach was proposed - one that would transform the way Customs facilitates and regulates trade. After a year of careful study and testing, TradeFIRST was officially launched by Permanent Secretary for Finance, Mr Peter Ong at the agency's event to mark International Customs Day 2011.

ABOUT TRADEFIRST

The Trade Facilitation and Integrated Risk-based System, or TradeFIRST in short, is a comprehensive assessment framework that integrates elements of facilitation, compliance and risk-management.

A one-stop service, TradeFIRST enables Singapore Customs to more proactively engage with traders and facilitate business operations in a way that is systematic, risk-based and consistent.

Companies assessed will be placed in one of five bands – Basic, Standard, Intermediate, Enhanced or Premium – according to how well they perform. The higher the band, the greater the number of facilitations the company will be eligible for. Companies in the top two bands will also undergo less frequent reassessment.

Such an approach encourages a virtuous cycle of compliance as companies with more robust systems, internal practices and security measures are rewarded with a higher level of facilitation. Closer, two-way interaction with account managers also helps companies better understand customs requirements and improve on their areas of weakness.

Lastly, TradeFIRST enables Singapore Customs to proactively meet business needs. Through the holistic assessment of companies and specialised knowledge of the respective industries, Customs' account managers will be better placed to effectively reach out to companies to offer them suitable schemes and facilitations. Companies in turn would be better able to take advantage of business opportunities as they arise.

REAPING THE BENEFITS

The TradeFIRST framework has been well-received by the trading community. The top three aspects which businesses found most useful were having a dedicated account manager, the single assessment approach and the transparency of the assessment criteria.

The common and transparent set of assessment criteria and guidelines under TradeFIRST encourages businesses to aim for higher levels of facilitation by enabling them to gauge where they stand and improve their systems and processes before undergoing formal assessment.

Of the 160 companies that have been assessed under TradeFIRST as at 28 February 2011, 30 have been certified under the highest "Premium" band.

Commending the holistic approach for removing uncertainty and ambiguity at the launch of the framework,



Singapore Customs officers were on hand to explain the benefits of TradeFIRST to some 250 representatives from businesses within the trading community who attended the launch of the framework.

Singapore Business Federation Chief Executive Officer Mr Teng Theng Dar said, "Singapore Customs has taken the lead in the region to respond to the business community's requirement in terms of supply chain connectivity."

"It's not just about enforcing rules, but facilitating trade while making companies aware of what is required on the security side of things."

Although all businesses are expected to benefit, TradeFIRST could be most helpful to small and medium enterprises like THT Logistics. The company has saved as much as \$25,000 from halving

its time and management costs on implementation.

"The biggest benefit is that we only need to go through one assessment to be awarded with multiple schemes," said THT's Managing Director, Mr Marcus Chang.

"TradeFIRST also provides consistency and predictability in our interactions with Singapore Customs as well as the facilitations we could be entitled to. With a better understanding of the regulatory requirements, we are able to lower our compliance and business costs."

MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR TRADEFIRST

"Under the new framework, companies with multiple schemes will only have one common renewal period. Since we are on several schemes with Singapore Customs, TradeFIRST helps us eliminate unnecessary procedures and streamline processes. This in turn reduces our business cost and increases overall efficiency."

—Mr Russell Tham, President of Applied Materials South East Asia

"One of the major benefits is that you have a single point of contact. And it's more than that. Basically you have a partner that understands your business and tries to work with you in way that keeps you robust while facilitating the business."

—Mr Wilfred Lim, Managing Director of Vopak Terminals Singapore

"Customs officers who attend to our applications have been very helpful and quick to respond to our queries on document submissions for the validation processes."

—Mr Hitoshi Shirai, Deputy Managing Director of Hitachi Asia

A Warehouse By Any Other Name: Customs' Innovative Business Solution

When approached by Princess Yachts Asia with a request that its imported luxury yachts be granted temporary Goods and Services Tax (GST) suspension until re-exported or sold, Singapore Customs showed its creativity and pro-enterprise mindset by adapting an existing regulation to new use.

Princess Yachts Asia had a business problem. As the exclusive distributor of UK-manufactured luxury yachts for Singapore and China, and a company actively involved in promoting the local leisure cruising industry and yachting lifestyle, it had imported luxury yachts as part of the 2009 Formula 1 (F1) Singapore Grand Prix events.

The vessels had been granted GST-suspension under Customs' Temporary Import Scheme (TIS). And since the exciting F1 activities hosted onboard for government officials and ultra-high net worth individuals were over, the yachts were supposed to be re-exported.

But the boating industry in Singapore and the region was growing. Since its incorporation in Singapore, Princess Yachts Asia had witnessed an increasing volume of sales and sales inquiries, with more expected to come. And given the country's economic stability and security, the company's senior management saw the merits of using Singapore as a hub to showcase and promote the luxury yachts to Asian markets.

The problem, however, was that if the yachts were to remain in Singapore beyond the allowable periods granted under the TIS, then the import GST on them would become payable. With the

luxury yachts each costing between \$1.1 to over \$8 million, paying their import GST would have meant immediate cash-flow issues for the company.

Princess Yachts Asia subsequently approached Singapore Customs to see if it could consider suspending the GST on the yachts until the vessels could be re-exported or sold to local buyers.

ZONES OF SUSPENDED GST

To remain relevant in today's changing business environment, Singapore Customs recognises the importance of balancing regulatory controls with a pro-enterprise mindset. It is by embracing a culture of service excellence and innovation, of seeing things from an industry perspective, that Singapore Customs is best able to facilitate trade.

As such, rather than rejecting the request outright, officers from across different Singapore Customs branches worked in close collaboration to find a business-friendly solution.

After meeting with Princess Yachts Asia, Singapore Customs decided that extending the TIS was unsuitable due to the lack of a definite timeline for which the yachts would be sold or re-exported.

Instead, the solution appeared to lie with the Zero-GST Warehouse Scheme (ZGS) - an existing scheme that provides for GST suspension on imported goods while allowing for an indefinite storage period.





As the name implies, however, existing zero-GST licensed premises were all land-based storage areas. It made little sense to move and store the enormous luxury yachts inside a warehouse.

But was a physical warehouse necessary? Thinking outside the box, Singapore Customs proposed the entirely new possibility of licensing the yachts' berthing area at One Degree 15 Marina Club under the ZGS.

A WAREHOUSE ON WATER

Deciding on the proposal's feasibility was no small task. Revenue risks had to be considered, which meant checking on existing regulations with the Singapore Maritime and Port Authority as well as the internal measures implemented by Princess Yachts Asia and the marina operator. For an agency committed to facilitating trade, taking existing control measures into account also ensures that Singapore Customs avoids excessive or duplicative regulation.

Another consideration for Singapore Customs was the positive impact this groundbreaking proposal would have on local leisure yachting. Licensing

From this facilitation, Princess Yachts Asia has benefited by saving an estimated minimum of \$70,000 per yacht. And with 10 yachts expected to be imported a year, this means annual savings of \$700,000 and significantly improved cash flow for the company.

marina wharfs to suspend the GST for imported yachts would facilitate industry growth and was likely to help Singapore's tourism sector, attracting more ultra-high net worth individuals to come visit.

Consequently, for the first time in Singapore Customs' history, a sea-based storage area was licensed under the ZGS. With a zero-GST licence, Princess Yachts Asia could have its imported

yachts berthed at the designed wharf areas at One Degree 15 Marina Club without payment of import GST.

From this facilitation, Princess Yachts Asia has benefited by saving an estimated minimum of \$70,000 per yacht. And with 10 yachts expected to be imported a year, this means annual savings of \$700,000 and significantly improved cash flow for the company.

"We greatly appreciate the assistance of the Customs team in providing us with advice on trading regulations and in meeting with our management team to assist us with all operational matters on site. Having them listen attentively and understand our problems has helped us make better management decisions and come up with better solutions on our end," said Mr Mohamad Amir Hassan, Office/Operations Manager of Princess Yachts Asia (Singapore).

For Singapore Customs, creating a new application for the ZGS not only serves to maximise the benefits of an existing scheme, it also promotes smarter regulatory practices and the use of creative problem solving among Customs officers.

Contraband Cigarette Seizures at Five-Year Low: Customs Enforcement Results 2010

With seizures at a record low, the abolishment of key syndicates, and higher demand for legitimate cigarettes, Singapore Customs' latest annual enforcement results show an improvement in the country's contraband cigarette situation. The continued success of Customs' three-pronged enforcement approach has also prompted more creative modes of cigarette smuggling.

In 2010, Singapore's overall contraband cigarette supply continued to shrink. The year's seizure of contraband cigarettes fell by 21% to 2.3 million packets, representing a new and significant five-year low.

Backing the idea of a diminishing black market for contraband cigarettes was the year's accompanying increase in cigarette duty collection, where revenue collected continued a five-year uptrend from \$861 million in 2009 to \$877 million last year.

In addition, fewer buyers of contraband cigarettes were caught - a decrease of 17% to 5,885 buyers, marking the lowest number in four years. Taken together, these encouraging figures show an increasing number of smokers turning away from illegal cigarette sources.

Such positive results have largely been credited to Singapore Customs' holistic three-pronged approach, one that involves penalties and prosecution, publicity and outreach effects, as well as frequent joint collaborations with agency partners.

Duty-Unpaid Cigarettes Seized (million packets)

2006	5.3
2007	4.4
2008	4.6
2009	2.9
2010	2.3

Duty Collection for Cigarettes (\$ million)

2006	663
2007	697
2008	763
2009	861
2010	877

DIVERSIFIED MODES OF SMUGGLING: FROM SAMPANS TO AEROPLANES

It appears that more criminals are wary of the stepped-up enforcement measures at our country's land checkpoints and island-wide as 2010's enforcement results reveal the rising trend of cigarette smugglers turning to alternative means of bringing in their contraband.

Over the past year, there were 38 major smuggling cases by sea involving over 500 cartons each - an increase from the

26 cases registered in 2009. Sampans, fishing boats, barges and passenger ferries were some types of sea vessels intercepted for smuggling illegal cigarettes into Singapore.

The total number of vessels seized by Customs for smuggling contraband cigarettes increased to nine from just five the previous year. To avoid detection, some smugglers had gone to great lengths to hide their contraband, stashing then in secret manholes and fuel compartments.



A manhole hidden beneath the passenger cabin floor mat of a motor launch found chock-full of contraband cigarettes concealed in black bags.



Two motorised sampans used to convey packages of contraband cigarettes.

Cigarette smugglers have also taken to the air, flying contraband hidden in big boxes disguised as printed documents or other innocuous goods into Changi Cargo Complex. A recent phenomenon, nine major cases were recorded in the past year, up from the three in 2009.

Said the agency's Deputy Head of Special Investigations Jeremy Lee, "These syndicates may have presumed we are always on the lookout for land and sea smuggling, which are more common, so they try to diversify their modes of entry."

To tackle the problem, Singapore Customs will remain vigilant and continue with efforts such as forging closer inter-agency cooperation. For instance, it has held meetings with the Changi Cargo Complex to discuss options for enhancing security and to educate its staff on how best to recognise suspicious shipments.

JOINING FORCES WITH ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS

Recognising that close collaboration with enforcement partners is a key component of law enforcement, Singapore Customs

actively participates in joint operations with partner agencies. These help not only to eradicate contrabands, but also to ensure border security and maintain law and order.

46 joint enforcement operations with agencies such as the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority and the Singapore Police Force were carried out in the past year, up from 33 the year before.

These intensified collective efforts, along with stricter checks, have crushed four key syndicates - two of which were using the air smuggling mode.

METHODS OF PERSUASION

You might recall one of the many public outreach and media publicity efforts that were aimed at raising awareness on the risks of dealing with contraband cigarettes.

Working with agencies such as the People's Association and the Civil Defence Force, Singapore Customs conducts island-wide roadshows on a regular basis for the masses as well as for specific target audiences.

A total of 208 roadshows were held in 2010 at heartland areas, foreign worker dormitories, factories as well as schools.



Some 2,000 cartons of illegal cigarettes of assorted brands seized from the secret compartments of a passenger ferry.

THE RISE OF AIR SMUGGLING

In a series of operations targeting contraband cigarette syndicates operating out of Changi Cargo Complex, Singapore Customs foiled four major smuggling attempts and smashed a key syndicate using the mode of air smuggling.

From gathered intelligence, the first operation in January 2010 resulted in the seizure of contraband cigarettes, vehicles and the arrest of several syndicate members. With Customs in close pursuit, the syndicate laid low for some time, only resurfacing in early September 2010.

Then, within a short span of two months, the agency thwarted another three major smuggling attempts and ultimately dismantled the syndicate.

The contraband cigarettes, falsely declared as printed documents, had been flown into Changi Cargo Complex where they would be smuggled out of the complex by syndicate members, sometimes in the wee hours.

The syndicate members either repackaged the illegal cigarettes and loaded them into cars to be driven out, or employed a decoy van to distract the authorities while another vehicle

carrying the contraband drove out of the complex.

The entire series of operations led to the seizure of more than 5,900 cartons of contraband cigarettes with duties amounting to almost \$540,000 payable, as well as eight vehicles used in the commission of the offences. Eleven syndicate members, aged between 26 and 60, were arrested and sentenced to prison terms of between 8 and 26 months.

LIQUOR SYNDICATE SMASHED

Ending 2010 on a high note, officers from Singapore Customs and the Singapore Police Force crushed a syndicate involved in the production and distribution of adulterated liquor in December last year.

As part of the 19-hour island-wide joint operation, raids were launched on a storage location, a production facility and distribution outlets located at places such as Hillview, Bukit Batok, Jurong West, Ang Mo Kio and Serangoon.

Ten men, aged between 27 to 40 years, were arrested and more than 3,000 bottles of liquor, infringing the trademark of renowned liquor brands such as Johnny Walker, Chivas Regal and Martell VSOP, were seized. The street value of the liquor was estimated at over \$94,000.

Five of the men were charged with offences under the Trade Marks Act while investigations on the rest are ongoing. The men could also face charges under the Customs Act.

OTHER ENFORCEMENT RESULTS

Although the number of arriving travellers compounded at the checkpoints for not declaring their liquor increased more than two-fold from 818 in 2009 to 2,037 last year, most were found to be minor offences.

On another front, two motor vehicle traders were prosecuted for under-declaring the value of some 233 cars imported to avoid paying higher taxes. This marks an improvement over 2009 where 14 traders were prosecuted for the evasion of motor vehicle duties for 4,932 cars.

Tampered fuel gauges represent another form of duty evasion. Under the law, Singapore-registered motor vehicles must have a petrol tank that is at least three-quarters full when departing Singapore.

In 2010, 24 motorists were prosecuted for tampering with their vehicles' fuel gauge to give a false reading - the same number of offenders as in 2009. Motorists are advised against attempting to cheat the authorities given the stringent checks at the checkpoints.



PHOTO: Singapore Police Force

ASEAN Pilots Self-Certification of Origin

To facilitate the trade of ASEAN origin goods, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei are piloting a new ASEAN Self-Certification Scheme for a one year period as part of a wider plan to roll out the scheme in all ASEAN member states by 2012. The scheme enables certified exporters to self-certify the origin of their exports to enjoy preferential tariffs under the ASEAN Free Trade Area.

Self-certification reduces the upfront administrative burden and cost to traders seeking preferential tariff treatment for their exports. It is envisaged that this will help improve the utilisation of tariff concessions available under the ASEAN Free Trade Area and further enhance intra-ASEAN trade.

The latest adoption of self-certification to facilitate ASEAN exports is an important development for Singapore traders, given that Singapore-ASEAN exports totalled a significant S\$145 billion in 2010.

The pilot self-certification project launched on 1 November 2010 involves 22 certified traders exporting from Singapore.

Under the conventional system, exporters would need to apply for the preferential certificate of origin - commonly known as Form D - from Singapore Customs in order to enjoy preferential tariffs for their goods exported to other ASEAN member states.

With the new self-certification scheme, certified exporters need not apply for Form D from Singapore Customs. Instead, they can simply self-declare the country of origin for their goods on the commercial invoice or, if the invoice is not available at the time of export, any other commercial document such as a billing statement or delivery order.

Specifically, certified exporters will benefit from:

- Greater convenience as there is no need to apply for Form D;
- Cost savings as the amount charged by declaring agents for a typical Form D application is about \$15; and
- Improved timeliness as self-certification can be performed 24/7 by the company itself.

Mr Chan Huan Siong, Regional Logistics Manager of Singapore Cables

Manufacturers, a certified exporter participating in the pilot project, praised the initiative calling it “a new breakthrough for custom documentation”. Self-certification will help his company achieve not just cost savings, but most importantly efficiency, he said.

With about 6,000 applications for Form D monthly, Singapore Customs estimates that full-fledged self-certification in 2012 will result in potential annual savings of about S\$1.08 million for some 850 exporters. The agency hopes that this reduction in business cost will enable traders to become more competitive.

COMPARISON OF PROCEDURAL FLOW BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND SELF-CERTIFICATION REGIMES

Conventional Certification Regime		Self-Certification Regime	
1	Manufacturer submits Factory Registration to Singapore Customs	1	Exporter submits application for Certified Exporter to Singapore Customs
2	Manufacturer submits Manufacturing Statement to Singapore Customs for verification	2	Exporter makes self assessment whether product meets the requisite Rules of Origin
3	Exporter submits application for Form D via TradeNet	3	Exporter makes self certification on own invoice
4	The importer makes a preferential tariff claim based on the Form D	4	The importer makes a preferential tariff claim based on the exporter’s self certification

Have Your Say: Strengthening Singapore's Supply Chain Security Through Advance Export Declaration

With increasing emphasis on trade security in the global arena, Singapore will be implementing Advance Export Declaration for all exports. Singapore Customs invites the trading community to provide feedback on the proposed implementation details so as to minimise its impact on trade.

Under Singapore's Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations, an export declaration must be submitted to Customs prior to the export of any type of goods. However, for non-controlled and non-dutiable goods exported by sea and air, an administrative facilitation was granted in 1976 to allow traders to submit the export declaration within three days of the goods' export.

With the implementation of Advance Export Declaration (AED), Singapore Customs will require all export declarations to be submitted before the goods are exported. Receiving the cargo information in advance will allow for risk analysis, ensuring that high-risk consignments are identified for further inspection before they are exported.

THE NEED FOR ROBUST SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY

As part of the global trading community, Singapore needs to play its part in maintaining supply chain security. Strengthening the country's supply chain security is crucial not only to Singapore's position as a secure and trusted global transportation and trading hub, it also

serves to promote international trade – a key component of its economy.

In 2005, Singapore signed the letter of intent to implement the World Customs Organisation's SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. By this, customs administrations commit to facilitating the global movement of goods by enhancing greater "end-to-end" supply chain security in partnership with other customs administrations and the private sector.

In accordance with the SAFE Framework, AED is already in force in many countries including the United States, the European Union, Japan, China and Australia. It is hence necessary to implement AED to bring Singapore's practice for export declarations in line with international norms.

BENEFITS FOR SINGAPORE AND BUSINESSES

When Singapore is regarded by its key trading partners and global industry players as a secure and trusted trading hub with sound supply chain security practices, companies and traders located in Singapore will stand to

benefit from increased business from overseas customers.

With AED in place, Singapore Customs also intends to conclude more mutual recognition arrangements with the customs administrations of key trading partners. This means that cargoes exported from Singapore would be recognised to be of lower risk and thereby facilitated at the point of import, providing greater predictability and minimising delays due to import inspections.

CONSULTING THE TRADING COMMUNITY

Mindful that the implementation of AED would impact the trading community, an inter-agency taskforce comprising Singapore Customs, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Transport and the Economic Development Board had conducted formal industry consultations from April to December 2010.

The taskforce received useful feedback from individual companies as well as key trade associations such as the Singapore Shipping Association, Singapore Logistics Association, Singapore Aircargo Agents Association, Singapore Manufacturers' Federation, Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers and Association of Small and Medium Enterprises.

WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK

As a next step, Singapore Customs is consulting the trading community on the proposed implementation details from 15 March to 12 April 2011. Please visit www.customs.gov.sg for more information and to provide your feedback.

Implementation of the Korea-Singapore Mutual Recognition Arrangement

As part of efforts to enhance global supply chain security and facilitate the movement of legitimate goods, Singapore Customs and Korea Customs Service signed an arrangement to recognise each other's supply chain security programmes in June 2010. The Korea-Singapore Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) took effect on 1 January 2011.



Under the MRA, Korea Customs Service will recognise goods exported by Singapore's Secure Trade Partnership-Plus (STP-Plus) companies as being of lower risk. Likewise, Singapore Customs will recognise goods exported by South Korea's Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) companies as being of lower risk.

As such, goods exported by STP-Plus and AEO companies are able to enjoy a higher level of facilitation during import

clearance in South Korea and Singapore respectively.

To enjoy the benefits under the Korea-Singapore MRA, Singapore traders importing from Korea's AEO companies will have to input a special code identifying the AEO exporter in their TradeNet permit application. In addition, STP-Plus companies will have to input their own unique identification code in the permit application.

Similarly, Singapore's STP-Plus companies exporting to Korea should provide their Korean importers with their unique STP-Plus code for declaration to Korean Customs Service so that the goods can enjoy facilitated clearance.

The full operational details of the Korea-Singapore MRA are available in Circular No. 22/2010 at www.customs.gov.sg

Duty and Manufacturing Licence Exemptions for Four Motorised Vehicle Types

As part of continued efforts to keep its rules and regulations relevant to society's changing needs, Singapore Customs has recently granted exemptions on the duty and manufacturing licence for powered kick scooters, self-balancing cycles, mobility scooters and all-terrain vehicles.

Duties play a significant role in Singapore's development and history. Originally introduced in 1967 for passenger vehicles to help protect and develop the local motor industry, they were increased in 1972, prompted by the need for more revenue, as well as to relieve traffic congestion and air pollution by discouraging the ownership of cars.

As the number of vehicles on the roads grew, duties were also subsequently introduced for motorised two-wheelers.

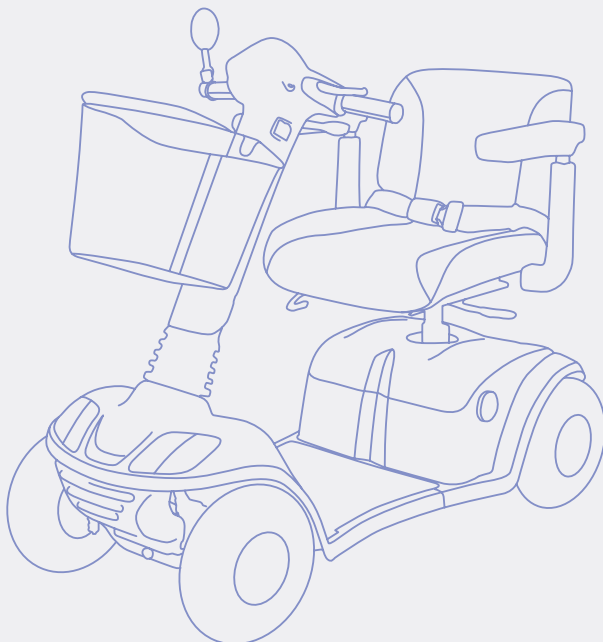
Today, duties are generally levied on all motor vehicles designed for transportation of up to nine persons as well as motorcycles.

Recognising the rate of new technological innovations and fast-evolving business

needs, Singapore Customs regularly reviews and updates its regulations and licensing requirements.

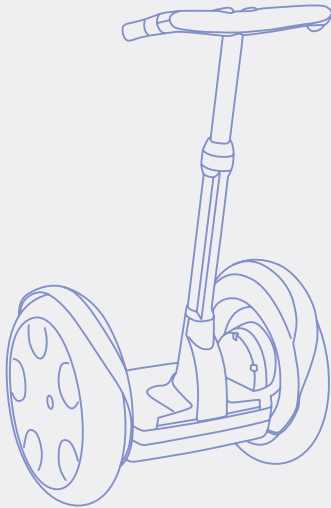
Keeping in mind the policy's intent to reduce traffic congestion and its harms, Singapore Customs had previously exempted certain vehicles that are not permitted for use on public roads from duties. These include go-karts, "pocket" motorcycles as well as race cars and motorcycles.

Since January 2011, four new categories of motorised vehicles have been added to the list and are now also exempt from duties. Similarly, the requirement for a licence to manufacture these four types of motorised vehicles in Singapore has been removed. Learn more about these vehicles and their everyday uses below.



1. MOBILITY SCOOTER

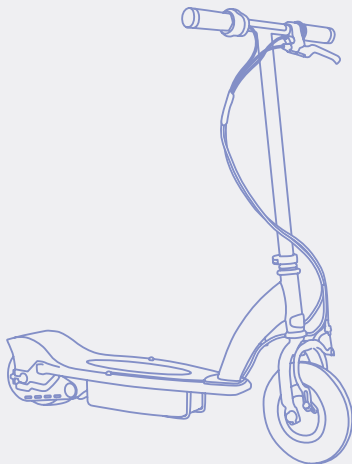
Also known as a power scooter or disability scooter, these three- or four-wheeled vehicles are commonly used by disabled and elderly persons for moving around. Given Singapore's ageing population, the demand and life-improving benefits of such mobility aids look set to increase.



2. SELF-BALANCING CYCLE

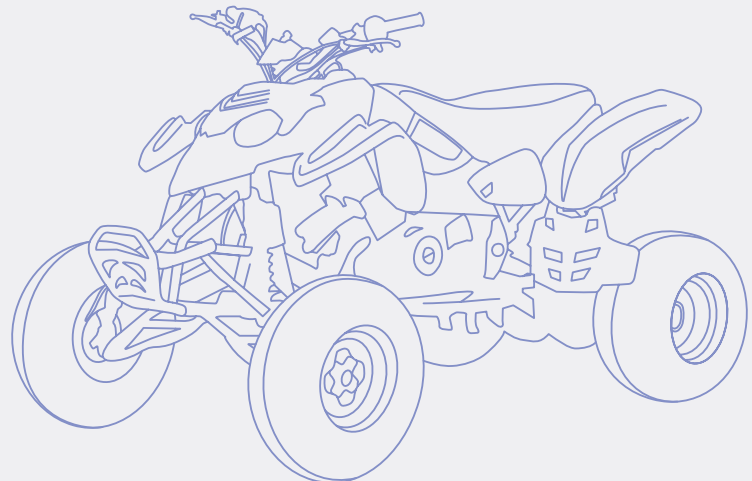
Defined as a one- or two-wheeled self-balancing electric vehicle, this category’s best example is perhaps the Segway Personal Transporter where the user stands on the vehicle and controls it by leaning in the direction he wants it to move. Other similar products in the market include the Toyota Winglet and the eniCycle.

At present, self-balancing cycles can be rented for use at Sentosa and Changi Airport’s Terminal 3. The creative use of self-balancing cycles to peddle beverages at 313@Somerset’s Food Republic has also become the food court’s signature feature. With the new duty exemption, the cycle is likely to see more innovative business applications and help improve service experience.



3. POWERED KICK SCOOTER

Also known as a push scooter, in-line scooter or bike board, this vehicle is essentially a kick scooter fitted with a gas-powered or electric engine. Such a modification allows the scooter to move on its own power without any effort from the rider. These vehicles have been welcomed by recreational sport enthusiasts as well as environmental protection companies seeking a “greener” transport option.



4. ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

This sturdy machine is also known as a quad or quad bike. Defined as a motorised, off-highway vehicle designed to travel on four low pressure tires, and with handlebars for steering

control, such all-terrain vehicles are used in Singapore by outdoor adventure sports providers. You may see some in use at recreational sites in Sembawang and Sentosa.

Details pertaining to the TradeNet permit applications for these motorised vehicles are available in Circular No. 23/2010 at www.customs.gov.sg

Get Customs Information On The Go with iChangi Mobile App

Customs information for travellers is now more accessible with the new iChangi mobile application for both iPhone and Android platforms.

The application provides information on the process of declaration and payment of taxes for passengers arriving in Singapore, duty-free concessions, Goods and Service Tax (GST) relief, as well as details on goods that are controlled or prohibited.

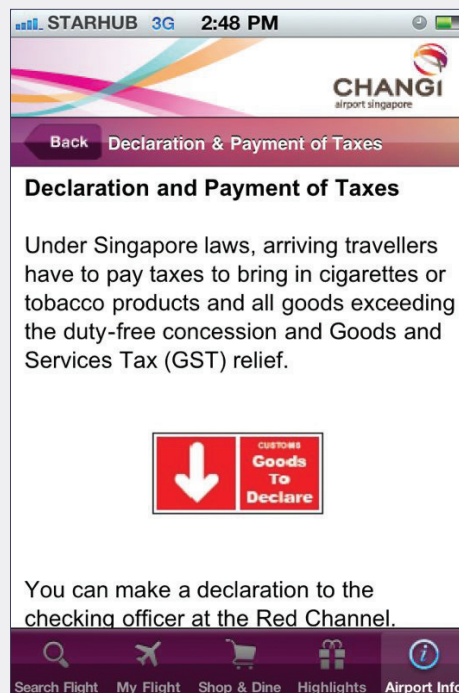
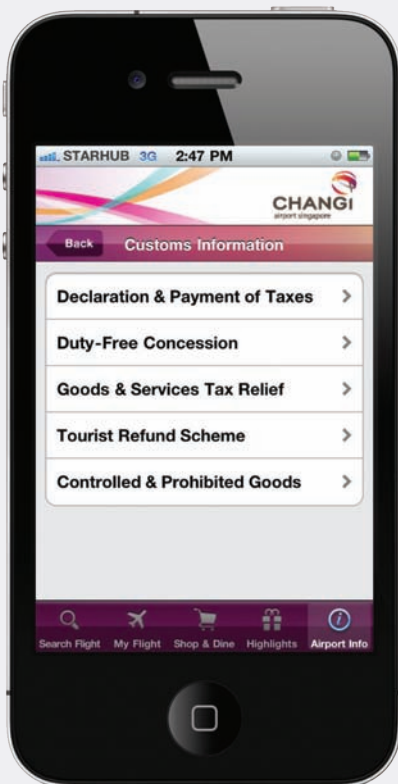
One can also find information on the process of claiming their GST refund under the Tourist Refund Scheme.

This initiative, a tie-up with the Changi Airport Group, is part of Singapore Customs' efforts to provide travellers with easy access to relevant customs information on the go, and to make clearing customs a smooth and hassle-free experience.

Useful information regarding flights, the airport, shopping and dining at Changi Airport are also available as part of the application's features.

You may download the free iChangi mobile application at the Apple iTunes store or the Android Market today.

For more information on the iChangi App, please visit www.changiairport.com.



Sharing Customs Expertise with Indian Counterparts

Widely recognised locally and internationally for TradeNet, its electronic national single window system as well as its efficient facilitation of cargo movement, Singapore Customs was invited to collaborate with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy to develop an executive programme on public sector leadership and management for officers from the Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Central Excise).



Mr Ho Ann Chuan, Head of Company Compliance, delivering the customs component of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy's five-day executive education programme for officers of the Indian Revenue Service.

Some 170 middle managers from the Indian Revenue Service attended the programme in five batches between October and December 2010 at the National University of Singapore.

The five-day executive education programme covered topics such as principles of governance, transparency and anti-corruption strategies, public sector values and ethics as well as risk management in decision-making.

Specially tailored to meet the needs of the Indian officials, the customs component of the programme covered clearance procedures, customs tax regimes and various schemes for national trade facilitation.

Delivering the customs segment was Mr Ho Ann Chuan, a veteran Customs officer with more than 35 years of experience under his belt. Mr Ho has headed various branches within Singapore Customs through the years, dealing with almost all areas of customs work. Currently Head of Company Compliance, his strength lies in customs documentation requirements and various licensing schemes.

Honoured to be given the opportunity to conduct the course, Mr Ho felt that



At Changi Airport, the Indian officers were briefed on Singapore's Tourist Refund Scheme (above) and viewed a demonstration on the use of the Customs tax payment kiosk (below).



WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID

"To have a very senior officer addressing us was an honour."

"It was a very informative lecture. Listening to a talented customs officer who has 35 years of experience was a pleasure."

"The exposure provided by Singaporean Customs was good. We learnt to improve our country's customs procedures."

"The programme was very extensive, covering all areas of customs. I found it very relevant to our field of work."

"It gave an insight into Singapore customs and helped us draw comparisons between our country and Singapore to make the attitudinal changes necessary to improve our competitiveness."

his responsibility extended beyond just sharing Singapore's systems and controls on customs administration with the Indian officials.

"All customs administrations formulate their systems and controls based on national requirements, hence it is not possible for them to totally adopt our systems and controls. It is more important that we share the principles behind their development, the participants can then be challenged to think about how they could make improvements to the systems and controls in their own country," explained Mr Ho.

Also included as part of the programme were field visits to Changi Airport, where the participants were briefed on checkpoint functions by Customs officers on the ground.

Feedback on the programme has been positive, with the Indian Revenue Service officers describing the experience as informative, relevant and useful.

Looking ahead, collaborations such as this enable Singapore Customs to share its experience and expertise with its international counterparts, thereby contributing to the advancement of the international customs community.

TRAINING CALENDAR

Programme	Dates
<p>CUSTOMS COMPETENCY PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESSES PART I</p> <p>This 2-day course provides an overview of customs procedures pertaining to import and export of goods, registration with Customs, the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, classification of goods under the Harmonised System, customs valuation and import of dutiable goods.</p>	<p>7 – 8 Apr 2011</p> <p>12 – 13 May 2011</p> <p>9 – 10 Jun 2011</p>
<p>CUSTOMS COMPETENCY PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESSES PART II</p> <p>This 4-day course covers topics such as temporary importation, manifest procedures, rules of origin, warehousing regimes, strategic goods control, supply chain security, customs laws and international regimes. It is held over 3 full days and 2 half days.</p>	<p>12, 13, 18, 19 & 25 Apr 2011</p> <p>12, 13, 18, 19 & 25 Jul 2011</p>
<p>STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESSES</p> <p>This course comprises 3 modules held over 3 half days. It provides an overview of Singapore's strategic goods control system and covers the registration requirements and application procedures for strategic goods permits. Companies that are interested to set up an internal export control compliance programme and wish to be considered for export facilitation under the Strategic Trade Scheme for Tier 2 or Tier 3 permits are encouraged to attend the course. Traders may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>4 – 6 Apr 2011</p> <p>15 – 17 Jun 2011</p> <p>17 – 19 Aug 2011</p> <p>3 – 5 Oct 2011</p>
<p>TRADERS' CLINICS</p> <p>These monthly one-on-one consultation sessions provide an avenue for traders to seek advice and provide feedback on general customs procedures and services.</p>	<p>27 & 28 Apr 2011</p> <p>25 & 26 May 2011</p> <p>28 & 29 Jun 2011</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED TRADERS</p> <p>This quarterly programme is designed to equip new traders with a better understanding of customs documentation procedures, as well as the various customs schemes and services available. For enquiries, please call 6355 2000 or email customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg.</p>	<p>30 Jun 2011</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS</p> <p>This bimonthly programme is designed to equip newly-registered manufacturers with a better understanding of the rules of origin under Singapore's Free Trade Agreements, the application procedures for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements. For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg. (See Event Highlights)</p>	<p>20 April 2011</p>

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS

Singapore Customs organises a bimonthly programme to equip newly-registered manufacturers and other interested exporters with the relevant know-how to benefit from tariff concessions offered under Singapore's network of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) for eligible Singapore-origin goods exported to our FTA partners.

Currently, Singapore's network of FTAs covers 18 regional and bilateral FTAs with 24 trading partners. Under these agreements, only goods that meet the rules of origin in the exporting country can qualify for tariff concessions in the country of importation. The rules of origin determine the "nationality" of the products exported. They ensure that only products that have undergone substantial manufacturing operations in Singapore can enjoy the tariff concession offered under the FTAs. This would help to make Singapore-origin products more competitive in the FTA partner countries.

The programme will cover pertinent information such as the rules of origin, application procedures for the preferential certificate of origin as well as the compliance requirements.

Participants will also be shown how to navigate Singapore's FTA website, which provides for the legal texts for the various agreements.

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to www.customs.gov.sg under "News & Events".

For enquiries and registration, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg.



We make trade easy, fair and secure