



CBIC Releases National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2023 Report

For Prelims: [National Time Release Study \(NTRS\)](#), [World Customs Organization \(WCO\)](#), Cargo Release Time

For Mains: TFA in India and its impact on cross-border trade. Ease of doing business in India.

Why in News?

Recently, the [Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs \(CBIC\)](#) has released the [National Time Release Study \(NTRS\) 2023 report](#), which measures the **cargo release time** at various ports in India.

- The report aims to assess the progress made towards the **National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) targets**, identify the impact of various trade facilitation initiatives, and identify the challenges to more expeditious reduction in release time.
- The study was conducted based on a **sample period of January 1-7, 2023**, comparing the performance with the corresponding periods of 2021 and 2022.
- The ports included in the study represent **seaports, air cargo complexes (ACCs), inland container depots (ICDs), and integrated check posts (ICPs)**. These account for approximately 80% of bills of entry and 70% of shipping bills filed in the country.

What is the Cargo Release Time?

- Cargo release time is defined as the **time taken from the arrival of the cargo at the Customs station to its out-of-charge for domestic clearance in case of imports and arrival of the cargo at the Customs station to the eventual departure of the carrier in case of exports.**
- Cargo release time is a key indicator of **trade efficiency and ease of doing business**, as it reflects the effectiveness of customs procedures and other regulatory processes involved in cross-border trade.
- Cargo release time is measured using **Time Release Study (TRS)**, a performance measurement tool recommended by the [World Customs Organization \(WCO\)](#).

What are the Key Highlights of NTRS 2023?

- **Import Release Time Improvements:**
 - The average import release time has **shown improvements compared to previous years.**
 - There was a **20% reduction in release time for ICDs**, an **11% reduction for ACCs**, and a **9% reduction for seaports in 2023 over 2022.**
 - In absolute terms, the import release time for seaports is 85 hours and 42 minutes, for ICDs is 71 hours and 46 minutes, for ACCs is 44 hours and 16 minutes, and for ICPs is 31 hours and 47 minutes.
 - The lower measure of standard deviation indicates a greater certainty of expeditious

release of imported cargo.

- **Reaffirmation of 'Path to Promptness':**

- The findings of NTRS 2023 reaffirm the importance of the **three-fold 'Path to Promptness' strategy**.
- This strategy includes **advance filing of import documents** for pre-arrival processing, **risk-based facilitation of cargo**, and the **benefits of the trusted client program - Authorised Economic Operators**.
- Cargoes that combine all three features under the 'Path to Promptness' achieve the **National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP)** release time target across all port categories.

- **Focus on Export Release Time:**

- NTRS 2023 has placed a greater focus on measuring the release time for exports.
- The study recognizes the distinction between **regulatory clearance (customs release) and physical clearance**.
 - Regulatory clearance is completed with the **grant of Let Export Order (LEO)**, **while physical clearance occurs upon the completion of logistics processes and the departure of the carrier with the goods**.

What are the Sources of Information for NTRS 2023?

- NTRS 2023 is based on data collected from various sources, such as ICEGATE portal, port authorities, customs brokers and participating government agencies (PGAs).
- NTRS 2023 also incorporates feedback from various stakeholders, such as exporters, importers, trade associations and chambers of commerce.
- NTRS 2023 is aligned with the WCO TRS methodology and follows international best practices.

What are the Benefits of NTRS 2023?

- NTRS 2023 provides a **comprehensive and objective assessment** of the cargo release time performance at various ports in India.
- NTRS 2023 helps to identify the **areas of improvement and benchmarking against global standards**.
- NTRS 2023 supports **evidence-based policy making** and implementation of trade facilitation measures that enhance trade efficiency and competitiveness.
- NTRS 2023 contributes to achieving the NTFAP targets and fulfilling India's commitments under the [WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement](#).

National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP)

- NTFAP aims to implement the provisions of the **WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in India**.
- TFA focuses on **simplifying customs procedures and norms for cross-border trade**.
- NTFAP was prepared by the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.
 - It includes over 90 specific activities with timelines for implementation, aligned with India's policy objectives.
- NTFAP covers areas like advance import document filing, risk-based cargo facilitation, trusted client program, infrastructure upgrades, legislative issues, outreach programs, and agency coordination.
- NTFAP reduces trade costs, enhances efficiency, supports evidence-based policy making, and fulfills India's TFA commitments.

What are the Initiatives Related to Logistics?

- [National Logistics Policy \(NLP\)](#)

- [Multimodal Transportation of Goods Act, 1993.](#)
- [PM Gati Shakti Scheme](#)
- [Multi Modal Logistics Parks](#)
- [LEADS Report](#)
- [Dedicated Freight Corridor](#)
- [Sagarmala Projects](#)
- [Bharatmala Project](#)

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs

- It is a **part of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance.**
- The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) was **renamed as the CBIC in 2018 after the roll out of the GST.**
- It deals with the tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of customs, central excise duties, Central GST (CGST) and Integrated GST (IGST).
 - **GST Law** comprising (i) Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (ii) State Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (iii) Union Territory Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017, (iv) Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (v) Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Act, 2017.

[Source: PIB](#)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiiias.com/printpdf/cbic-releases-national-time-release-study-ntsr-2023-report>