Customs Single Window/CERTEX

The Single Window/CERTEX is an electronic connection between Member State Customs Clearance Systems and DG Sante's TRACES system. The connecting database (CERTEX) which facilitates the electronic communication between systems, was developed and is maintained by DG TAXUD. In Ireland's case our import clearance system is the Automated Import System (AIS).

From 1st March 2023 it is mandatory for all EU Member State Customs Authorities to carry out electronic checks on specific data declared on the Customs Import Declaration to ensure it matches the equivalent data on all CHED and COI certificates. The following is a list of the certificates to which the checks apply along with the relevant document code:

Certificate Type	Certificate Type Detail	Data Element 2/03
COI	Certificates of Organic Conformity	C644
CHED.PP	Plants and plant products	C085
CHED.D	Food and feed of non-animal origin	C678
CHED.P	Food and products of animal origin	N853
CHED.A	Live animals	C640

The document codes listed above are inserted in Data Element 2/03 on the import declaration and are the trigger for the CERTEX checks. All the above-mentioned certs must be declared at goods shipment item level on the customs declaration. AIS will reject these certs if inserted at goods shipment level.

On multi line-item import declarations the certificate number must be declared for every line item on the customs declaration where the Combined Nomenclature (CN) code requires a certificate. Insertion of the same certificate number in several line items on the import declaration may be required. Certificates of the same type may not be declared on the same line item. The import declaration will accept combinations of different types of certificates on each line item. For example, a single line item may require the declaration of a CHED.D certificate with a COI certificate or a CHED.D, CHED.PP and a COI.

Certificate Availability Check

When the CN code requires any of the above-mentioned certificates/licences on the customs import declaration AIS will carry out an initial validation of the certificate number. AIS will reject the import declaration before an MRN is issued, if the certificate number cannot be found in the relevant EU database. If the certificate number is valid, processing of the declaration will continue and the MRN will issue as normal. Declarants need to submit the certificate in full to the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), complete all necessary actions, before declaring the certificate number on the import declaration. If the certificate number is valid but has been rejected by the relevant agency, AIS will reject the import declaration before the MRN is issued.

Certificate Status

When the goods are 'presented' to customs on arrival into Ireland, AIS will electronically check the TRACES database. Once the relevant authority has validated the certificate, AIS will receive a positive response back from TRACES. This will allow the process to move to the next stage, the Quantity Management (QM) check, and CN Code checks. If AIS receives a 'negative' response back from TRACES,

this means that the status of the Certificate is not valid, and AIS will not commence the QM checks. AIS will poll CERTEX every hour to check if the certificate has been validated. AIS will not commence the QM checks until all other controls on the declaration have been released.

CN Code Check

The CN code check verifies that the CN code declared on the customs declaration matches the CN code declared on the relevant certificate. AIS will always have the CN code declared at 10-digit level. The certificates will regularly have the CN code declared at 4, 6 or 8 digit level. This check will match whatever number of digits are available on the certificate. For example, code 2002 10 10 00 on an import declaration will match successfully with code 2002 on the certificate. Where all CN code check responses back from TRACES are positive, this will allow the declaration to move to the next stage.

Quantity Management Checks

The QM check verifies that the net mass declared on the customs declaration does not exceed the net mass on the certificate by any amount greater than 0.04kg . So, where there is a net mass discrepancy of 0.04kg or less for a CN Code, and if all else is in order, the QM check will pass.

In certain limited circumstances, the certificate will not have a net mass figure declared but will have a supplementary units figure declared. In these instances, AIS will perform the check using the supplementary units figure declared in the import declaration. Where AIS receives a positive response back from TRACES, this will allow the process to move to the next stage.

Quantity Management/CN code Failure

Where AIS receives a negative response back from TRACES (meaning there is a mismatch between the quantity declared and that available on the certificate or a CN Code mismatch). AIS will return a IM099 message to the declarant with the reason for failure outlined. The line-item detail where the failure occurred will also be provided in the IM099 message. The declaration will move to a status of "reservation pending". At this point the declarant will have to amend the declaration in AIS by correcting the original data. The declarant should then resubmit the declaration.

If the Quantity Management and CN code(s) checks are passed, the declaration will move to released, once any other controls have been completed and provided there are sufficient monies in the account to pay any duties or taxes owed.

In certain circumstances a declarant may not be able to get the declaration to pass QM. This may be due to structure of the declaration, or the CHED may not cover all the product on the relevant line item in the declaration. In these cases, the declarant should contact the relevant Customs Station and provide a reason as to why the Quantity Management checks are failing. In certain circumstances the Customs Station may manually move the declaration on to complete processing.