

AEO Benefits

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Since the adoption of the SAFE Framework in June 2005, several countries have already introduced AEO or AEO-type programmes and in all cases certain benefits are being offered to accredited AEOs. While the PSCG fully accepts that, for a variety of reasons, it is not possible for all Customs administrations to offer exactly the same benefits, it nevertheless believes that it is imperative to establish a core set of internationally accepted trade facilitation benefits that could be provided to AEOs under all relevant national programmes. Such benefits should be transparent and meaningful to the extent that they not only justify the additional costs sustained by economic operators in meeting prescribed AEO requirements but also bring those operators real improvements and facilitation gains, above and beyond the normal procedures enjoyed by non-Authorized Economic Operators.

The PSCG believes that, as stated in Chapter 5.3 of the SAFE Framework, benefits for AEOs should be “meaningful, measurable and reportable”. Indeed, not only should those measurable benefits be reportable, they should be reported to the AEO, in each country, on a regular basis.

In addition, accredited AEOs could enjoy trade facilitation benefits listed below. These do not establish a required set of benefits that all administrations must offer - they are an indicative list of example benefits that are subject to specific Customs consideration, offering and approval. The PSCG hopes that this list of AEO benefits will provide useful guidance to Customs administrations as they implement AEO programmes.

- mutual recognition of AEO status by Customs administrations
- expedited processing and release of shipments, supported by regular “time required for release” studies
- financial guarantee waivers, reductions or rebates
- notification of intention to release prior to goods’ arrival i.e. pre-clearance
- pre-qualification for simplified procedures, including possibilities for a single-step process, or a two-step process for release/clearance purposes, according to the importer’s preference
- establishment of economic operator based profiles, and audit-based controls, as opposed to transaction-based controls
- priority of inspection and use of non-intrusive inspection equipment whenever physical examination is required
- priority Customs’ processing during a period of elevated threat conditions

- priority treatment in post-incident resumptions and trade recovery programmes
- AEO status should be a significant factor in determining the administrative settlement of a Customs offence (consistent with Annex H, Chapter 1, Standard 23 and Standard 3.39 of the RKC)
- self-assessment when Customs automated systems are not functioning
- an option to provide a reduced standard data-set for security risk assessment purposes, as follows:
 - (i) transport document number
 - (ii) conveyance reference number e.g. flight number, voyage number
 - (iii) consignor name
 - (iv) consignee name
 - (v) carrier name
 - (vi) notify party
 - (vii) place of loading
 - (viii) Customs office of exit
 - (ix) first place of arrival
 - (x) date and time of arrival at first place of arrival
 - (xi) goods description or brief cargo description
 - (xii) number of packages or number of pieces
 - (xiii) total gross weight