

Singapore Customs
23 February 2021

Good Practices in Facilitating the Cross-Border Movement of COVID-19 Vaccines

1. Which of the measures outlined in the WCO Resolution on the role of Customs in facilitating the cross-border movement of situationally critical medicines and vaccines has your Customs administration implemented in practice? Please provide details of the implementation.

Singapore Customs has implemented the following measures outlined in the WCO Resolution on the Role of Customs in Facilitating the Cross-Border Movement of Situationally Critical Medicines and Vaccines:

(i) Carry out the clearance of situationally critical medicines and vaccines for export, transit and import as a matter of priority in appropriate facilities in order to prevent possible detrimental product temperature variations due to delays.

Details: Singapore's border agencies and the health authority are keenly aware of the time and temperature-sensitivity of the COVID-19 vaccines and work closely to facilitate the import of such shipments.

(ii) Provide mechanisms for identifying such medicine and vaccine shipments during import or export, such as on import or export documentation.

Details: Singapore's health authority has informed local companies of the documentation procedure for the import of the COVID-19 related medicine and vaccine shipments, including the use of relevant product code and the "Product interim authorisation reference number" in the importers' permit declarations, to facilitate the importation of the items.

(iii) Apply risk-based control and perform examinations on shipments declared as such medicines and vaccines only in exceptional circumstances, and only at the appropriate moment and place.

Details: Singapore's border agencies work closely together to reduce the need for physical checks on shipments of COVID-19 vaccines while maintaining the integrity of Singapore's border and supply chain security.

(iv) Ensure that inspections by other government agencies and inspections by Customs are coordinated and, if possible, carried out at the same time.

Details: Same as above for (iii).

(v) Cooperate and coordinate with relevant government agencies, in particular health authorities, and supply chain stakeholders, so that facilities, security arrangements and border processes are ready for the large-scale and complex task ahead.

Details: Singapore has set up a joint taskforce, comprising border agencies, relevant regulatory bodies and private stakeholders to facilitate the import and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

2. Was any relevant information concerning the Customs clearance of COVID-19 vaccines and the goods and devices used for their shipment and transportation, made publicly available, for example on the Customs administration's web-site? If yes, please provide a URL. If not made publicly available, was relevant information provided to the supply chain stakeholders – manufacturers, exporters, importers, logistics providers, etc.?

Importers are informed of the relevant information required for the importation of COVID-19 vaccines via Singapore's health authority's website at <https://www.hsa.gov.sg/covid-19-information-and-advisories>.

3. Was any dedicated guidance made available to the field Customs officers with regard to the Customs clearance of COVID-19 vaccines for export, transit and import, as well as the goods and devices used for the vaccines' shipment and transportation? If yes, please provide details on how the guidance was disseminated.

Singapore's border agencies receive guidance from the health authority on their control regime for the COVID-19 vaccines which enabled the identification of COVID-19 vaccines shipments from the product code, product description and the product interim authorisation reference number declared in the permit declarations. Singapore's border agencies also receive guidance from the health authorities on the properties of the COVID-19 vaccines, and officers are trained on the appropriate steps to maintain the integrity of the vaccines during the customs clearance process.

4. Has any training been provided to the staff of your Customs administration in anticipation of the COVID-19 vaccines distribution effort, for example training for handling of time- and temperature-sensitive items, training for handling of dangerous goods (e.g. dry ice), training for identifying the COVID-19 vaccines on import or export documentation?

Please refer to answer for Question 3 above.

5. What mode of transport was used for the exportation/importation of COVID-19 vaccines from/into your country?

Air transport.

6. What are the documents required for the exportation of COVID-19 vaccines from your country? (*applies to the Members exporting COVID-19 vaccines*)

Not applicable.

7. Which national authorities are responsible for the checking and clearing the COVID-19 vaccines shipments for exportation? How is the cooperation between these authorities arranged? (*applies to the Members exporting COVID-19 vaccines*)

Not applicable.

8. Is there any exchange of information/data between the Customs authorities of the exporting country and the Customs authorities of the importing country? What type of information is exchanged? How is the exchange of information arranged/regulated?

No.

9. Was the Customs transit procedure used for the COVID-19 vaccines imported into your country? If yes, why/what was the rationale?

Not applicable. The COVID-19 vaccines are currently imported directly from Europe without the need for transit.

10. Does your administration implement risk management techniques related to the cross-border movement of COVID-19 vaccines?

Yes. Singapore's border agencies work together to reduce the need for intrusive checks on shipments of COVID-19 vaccines while maintaining the integrity of Singapore's border and supply chain security.

11. What are the documents required for the importation of COVID-19 vaccines in your country?

Importers are required to obtain a valid import license or interim authorisation from Singapore's health authority to import vaccines into Singapore. They are then required to declare the import license/interim authorisation and the product interim authorisation reference number in their permit declaration for the import of COVID-19 vaccines into Singapore.

12. Which national authorities are responsible for the checking and clearing the COVID-19 vaccines shipments for importation? How is the cooperation between these authorities arranged?

Singapore's border agencies and the health authority work closely to facilitate the import and clearance of the COVID-19 vaccines. The shipments are processed pre-arrival in Singapore through our National Single Window, which connects all the relevant competent authorities.

13. If information is available, what was the time required for the release of the COVID-19 vaccines shipments imported into your country?

The permit declarations are risk assessed and pre-approved prior to the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines, and the shipments can be released immediately upon arrival in Singapore if the documents are in order and not flagged for checks.

14. Has your government considered duty and tax waivers for the importation of COVID-19 vaccines?

The procurement and coordination of COVID-19 vaccines for the national COVID-19 vaccination programme is overseen by an inter-agency taskforce comprising senior public sector representatives advised by a scientific panel. COVID-19 vaccines imported by Singapore's Health Ministry for official use are exempted from Goods and Services Tax (GST).

15. Please include any other relevant information you wish to share.

Not applicable.