

## India

### ARTICLE 7: RELEASE AND CLEARANCE OF GOODS

India is compliant with all the commitments made under WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement.

One of the articles, **Article 7.6** of the agreement mandates, the members to measure and publish their average release time of goods periodically and in a consistent manner.

Accordingly, a Working Group on Time Release Study (TRS) has been specifically created to focus on conducting TRS. The Working Group comprises not only of the government agencies but also trade bodies and other relevant stakeholders such as custodians. The Working Group meets periodically, to decide on the way forward for achieving the desired objectives of the TRS.

TRS helps to showcase the performance not only of the specific ports and Customs formation but also other agencies involved in border clearances as well private stakeholders. The study is an important tool to identify the bottlenecks impacting clearances at the ports and provides suitable recommendations to remove them.

Since 2019, the National Committee on Trade Facilitation has been conducting annual National Time Release Study (NTRS) across 15 Ports/Customs station across the country, to assess average release time for both imports and exports, as well as identify impediments impacting the release time and recommendations to address them. Simultaneously, some of the Customs formations at respective ports, too had conducted and released their local TRS along with the NTRS, 2022. The findings and recommendations from the NTRS are communicated to the relevant stakeholders for appropriate action.

The following tangible results were achieved so far:

1. The annual NTRS conducted by India provides an evidence based insight on Average Cargo Release time for both imports and exports.
2. The latest NTRS 2022 revealed that the average import release time in India is consistently reduced over the period of time.
3. Through NTRS, India has been able to identify the existing bottlenecks in cargo clearance process and has made necessary policy and technological interventions to improve it.
4. The NTRS has helped in nudging the other regulatory agencies and private stakeholders involved in cargo clearance to improve their processes so as to reduce the overall release time.

More information:

1. <https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources/htdocs-cbec/implmntin-trade-facilitation/national-time-release-study-2022.pdf>
2. <https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources//htdocs-cbec/implmntin-trade-facilitation/National%20Time%20Release%20Study%202021.pdf>