



**Ministry of Planning and Finance
Customs Department
Conducts 2021 Time Release Study
for Trade Facilitation**

**PRESS RELEASE
[7th January 2022]**

Outline

Customs Department released the findings of its 2021 Time Release Study (TRS) conducted in Asia World Port Terminal (Yangon) and Yangon Air Cargo Terminal. The TRS measured and reported the time taken by Customs Department and other government agencies to release imported cargoes.

The TRS is a method endorsed by the World Customs Organization (WCO) for measuring the time taken by authorities to release import/export cargo and is recognized as a means of identifying bottlenecks and improving performance in import/export processes. Since entry into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in February 2017, members have been required to measure and publish average release times of import/export goods (Article 7.6 of the TFA).

The Director-General of Customs Department, Mr.Thein Swe, said it was pleasing to see the results of the 2021 study as an objective indicator for areas to be improved to facilitate trade and to see improvement in 2021, which he attributed largely to the efforts of Customs, trade-related agencies and trade working together to achieve a seamless flow of cross-border trade.

The comparison of the overall average release time of 2019 TRS and 2021 TRS are summarized as follows:

Import Process	Survey Area	2019 Overall average release time	2021 Overall average release time	Difference overall release time between 2019 and 2021
Vessel/aircraft Arrival up to gate out	Asia World Port Terminal (Yangon)	9 days 6 hours 43 minutes	6 days 19 hours 49 minutes	2 days 10 hours 54 minutes
	Yangon Air Cargo Terminal	5 days 8 hours 48 minutes	4 days 2 hours 4 minutes	1 days 6 hours 44 minutes

At AWPT, overall average release time of 2021 is reduced than that of 2019. The reasons are described as follow:

- (1) In 2019 TRS, for all the declarations (Green, Yellow & Red Channel), cargoes are released after getting the signature of the customs officer on Release Order (RO). In 2021 TRS survey, the signature of the customs officer on RO is needed only for the Red channel declarations.
- (2) The average time taken is decreased because the Green and Yellow channel declarations can be released even on holidays.
- (3) During the period of 2019 TRS survey, selectivity criteria of CEPT consignments must be changed from Yellow to Red Channel. In 2021 TRS survey, goods except medicine and other restricted cargoes are allowed to release as the original selectivity.
- (4) Customs officers can handle the customs clearance procedures efficiently due to the decrease of trade volume during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although the result of the 2021 average release time was reduced than that of 2019, at AWPT, the causes of delay that affected on the 2021 average release time are found out as follow:

- (1) Although Customs Brokers (CB) and Importers has already received RO of the cargoes which are in Green and Yellow channel, some import cargoes will not be transported out of the container yard because of the difficulties such as unavailability of warehouse, workers, etc.
- (2) In case of LCL cargo, the physical examination will conduct only at the time the Customs officer, Shipping Line, CB or importer and officer from Myanmar Port Authority gather together for inspection purpose. Although CB and importers has already received RO for the declaration which are in Green and Yellow channel, the cargoes can only be released at the day of process completion inspected by the team.
- (3) In some cases, there is a difference between the actual Arrival Date and the Arrival Date inputted to the DMF- service (Manifest submission) used by Shipping Agency Department (SAD) to send Manifest Information to Customs Department via MACCS because SAD registers the Arrival Date on Friday (before Saturday and Sunday) if the ship arrived at the port on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

At YACL, overall average release time of 2021 is reduced than that of 2019. The reasons are described as follow:

- (1) The TRS 2021 was conducted during the covid-19 pandemic. Besides, the operating hours for cargo clearance had been extended to 24/7

working hours to fulfill the requirements of the Covid-19 prevention measures.

- (2) In 2021 TRS, signing procedure on RO after completing the document and physical examination was omitted and this have an effect on reducing the removal time.
- (3) Customs officers can handle the customs clearance procedures efficiently due to the decrease of trade volume during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Although the result of the 2021 average release time was reduced than that of 2019, at YACL, the causes of delay that affected on the 2021 average release time are found out as follow:

- (1) Since 2021 TRS was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic period, 70% of the importation were medicines and medical supplies. The delay in application process were caused because the importers, other than importers who imported the medicine regularly, were inexperienced and misunderstood with the preparation in data needed for application and the instructions issued by the FDA during the pandemic. Moreover, the number of FDA staff decreased due to the work rotation during pandemic period.
- (2) Although customs procedures were completed, importers did not take out their cargoes because of insufficient space at their warehouse, possible damage due to deficient quality of their warehouse for the goods that needs to be kept in a limited temperature, and higher charges caused for maintaining the storage facilities.
- (3) Importers took time to some extent in preparation for the necessary documents and the time taken will be reduced if the importers could be able to process the document preparation more expeditiously.

The Director-General of Customs Department, Mr.Thein Swe, acknowledged the concerned officials and trade's contribution to this Time Release Study, in particular, TRS Working Group, other Government Agencies and representatives of the private sectors, who provided advice and assistance.

Key findings and actions to be taken for further trade facilitation are (i) to consider the procedures of OGAs and Private Sectors constantly (ii) to conduct Awareness training to CB or importers including the trading community (iii) to advance the implementation of the WTO TFA and other international standards (iv) to consider for registering the arrival time and manifest information towards MACCS by CB or importer (v) to appoint more staff. It is also intended that regular Time Release Studies continue to be conducted.

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