



Frequently Asked Questions

EU – US Mutual Recognition Decision

On May 4, 2012, the United States of America (U.S.) and the European Union (EU) signed a decision on the mutual recognition of their respective trade partnership programmes, namely the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) programme in the U.S. and the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme in the EU ('the Decision').

The Decision was signed in Washington DC by Acting Commissioner David V. Aguilar, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Director-General Heinz Zourek, Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD) of the European Commission.

The Decision recognizes compatibility between the EU and the U.S. trade partnership programmes. Each customs authority will treat members of the other customs authority's programme in a manner comparable to the way it treats members of its own programme.

"I can look back with pride on the considerable work that was completed by CBP and TAXUD to make this effort come to fruition and that we always maintained the necessary focus on security throughout the process," said Acting Commissioner Aguilar.

"Today's decision on the mutual recognition of the EU and U.S. trade partnership programmes is a win-win achievement: It will save time and money for trusted operators on both sides of the Atlantic while it will allow customs authorities to concentrate their resources on risky consignments and better facilitate legitimate trade," said Director-General Zourek.

C-TPAT is a voluntary government-business initiative to build cooperative relationships that strengthen and improve overall international supply chain and U.S. border security. C-TPAT recognized that U.S. CBP can provide the highest level of cargo security only through close cooperation with the ultimate owners of the international supply chain such as importers, carriers, consolidators, licensed U.S. customs brokers, and manufacturers.

AEO is a partnership programme based on World Customs Organisation (WCO) standards. It is used as a risk-assessment tool, provides less redundancy and duplication efforts, helps provide a common standard for trade facilitation, and allows for better transparency by providing closer collaboration among customs administrations and between customs administrations and members of their trade partnership programme.

This document was developed by both CBP and TAXUD

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General Questions

1. What is mutual recognition of trade partnerships programmes?

Mutual recognition (MR) is an agreement/arrangement by which each party recognises the compatibility of the other party's trade partnership programme and agrees to treat operators holding a membership status under the other customs authority's programme in a manner comparable to the way it treats members in its own trade partnership programme, to the extent practicable and possible. This treatment includes, in particular, taking favourably into account in its risk assessment, for the purpose of the conduct of inspections or controls, the respective membership status of an operator authorised by the other customs authority in order to facilitate trade and encourage the adoption of effective security-related measures. MR implementation requires the exchange of programme information between the customs authorities of the two parties.

By linking the various trade partnership programmes through MR, a unified and sustainable security posture is created that increases security of and facilitates global cargo trade.

The World Customs Organization (WCO) *Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE)* identifies MR as a key element to strengthen and facilitate end-to-end security of international supply chains and as a useful tool to avoid duplication of security and compliance controls.

While a trade partnership programme may have a customs simplification dimension (such as AEOC in the EU), such elements fall, for the time being, outside the scope of MR.

The EU and the U.S. have entered into a number of Mutual Recognition Agreements/Arrangements (MRA) with key trading partners.

The following link provides you with details of the individual MRAs that the EU has concluded:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/index_en.htm.

The U.S. has signed seven MRAs so far: New Zealand (2007); Canada and Jordan (2008); Japan (2009); Korea (2010); the EU and Taiwan (2012)¹.

C-TPAT programme information may be found at www.cbp.gov/ctpat

2. What are the benefits under a MRA?

MRAs provide benefits to both customs administrations and operators holding a membership status under either trade partnership programme. Some of the key benefits include:

- **Common Standard/Trade Facilitation** - Companies only have to conform to one set of security requirements. Avoiding the burden of addressing different sets of requirements as a shipment moves through the supply chain in different countries facilitates international trade. Moreover, since MR is based on both programmes having equally stringent security criteria, companies will have an easier task in documenting that their business partners comply with both programmes' security requirements.
- **Reduced Number of Validations** – Unnecessary validations are avoided with companies no longer being validated twice, i.e. a first validation visit conducted by the local customs administration at the moment when the company is certified as AEO and a second validation visit conducted by C-TPAT in the event that no MRA was in place. Moreover, a duplication of revalidation visits is also avoided.

¹ MRA is signed between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States. C-TPAT and Taiwan AEO are the designated parties responsible for implementing the MRA.

- **Faster Validation Process** – By accepting the status of a foreign facility as AEO certified, C-TPAT no longer needs to conduct a validation visit there. This means that the C-TPAT validation process is faster and more efficient.
- **Fewer controls** - The status of the trade partnership programme participant is recognized by both programmes and it is used as a risk-assessment factor in the automated targeting systems. This reduction is applied at the consignment level. Importers, exporters, and manufacturers are entitled to this reduction.
- **Efficiency** - C-TPAT does not have to expend its limited resources to send its staff overseas to validate a facility that has already been certified by the AEO programme.
- **Transparency in Operations** - Closer collaboration among customs administrations and between customs administrations and members of their trade partnership programme should lead to more transparency in international commerce. Similar security platforms and the exchange of information between all of these partners expedite and facilitate the movement of legitimate international commerce.
- **Marketability** – Both AEO and C-TPAT companies are considered secure and reliable traders by both the U.S. and the EU authorities respectively. This seal of approval increases a company's marketability and overall brand equity all over the world leading to further business opportunities.

3. **What is the content of the decision signed between the U.S. and the EU? How will the decision work in practice?**

According to the Decision, the EU and the U.S. will recognise each other's security certified operators and will take the respective membership status of certified trusted traders favourably into account to the extent possible and practicable. The favourable treatment provided by mutual recognition will result in lower costs, simplified procedures and greater predictability for transatlantic business activities.

4. **How is the decision signed between the U.S. and the EU implemented?**

The exchange of programme information and the granting of benefits to operators holding a membership status in the respective trade partnership programmes are implemented in two phases.

Following the launch of the information exchange of EU AEO members in July 2012, manufacturers and exporters shipping to the U.S. started to receive a reduction of their targeting scores in CBP's automated targeting system.

At that point, C-TPAT also started to recognize and accept the status of an AEO company in the EU. This means that if a C-TPAT visit needs to take place but the manufacturing facility in the EU holds an AEO certificate, that visit is no longer necessary; the elimination of unnecessary validations is one of the key benefits of mutual recognition.

As the Decision is reciprocal, following the launch in January 2013 of the information exchange of C-TPAT importer members that also export to the EU, the EU will start to recognize that status in the EU's risk management systems. This means that as C-TPAT exports reach any of the 27 Member States, those shipments will be considered secure and will receive a lower risk score.

5. What type of data is being exchanged between the U.S. and the EU?

Data to be exchanged under this MRA includes:

- a) name of operator;
- b) address;
- c) status of membership;
- d) validation or authorization date;
- e) suspensions and revocations;
- f) the unique identification number (EORI number or C-TPAT Account number); and
- g) details that may be mutually determined between the customs authorities, subject, where applicable, to any necessary safeguards.

6. How is the data being exchanged and is the data protected?

Data is being exchanged automatically every 24 hours through official government channels. Data is encrypted and the exchange mechanism put into place is protected by firewalls, security certificates, and other protective measures to ensure that the information is not compromised by anyone.

Who Benefits and How Under MR?

Operators in the EU

Operators holding an AEO certificate with the safety and security component (AEOS or AEOF) that have given their consent to the exchange of information with third countries for the purposes of mutual recognition may be eligible to benefit from the Decision.

1. I have not given my consent for the exchange of information with third countries; can I benefit from the Decision?

No. To comply with EU Data Protection legislation only the data of AEOs that have provided their written consent is exchanged with partner countries.

2. How can I provide my consent in order to benefit from the Decision?

Normally this consent is provided to the national customs administration at the time of submitting the application for an AEO certificate. In any case, this consent can be provided or withdrawn at any time by the AEO applicant/holder. In order to provide/withdraw the consent you can contact the Member State where you applied for the AEO certificate. You can find the list of AEO national contact points through the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/aeo_contacts_for_traders_en.pdf

3. I am a holder of an AEOC (Customs simplifications) certificate. Can I benefit from the Decision?

No. As the Decision only covers the security component of the AEO programme only holders of AEOS (security and safety) and AEOF (customs simplifications/security and safety) certificates can benefit from MR.

Since AEOCs are not required to comply with security and safety standards, they are not entitled to any of the AEO benefits related to security and safety under a MRA.

4. How can I complement my AEOC status with AEOF in order to benefit from the Decision?

Contact the customs administration of the Member State which issued the AEOC certificate. An additional requirement for AEOC and AEOF consists in complying with the appropriate security and safety standards. In order to complement the AEOC status with AEOF, the holder of an AEOC certificate will have to apply and undergo the relevant examinations and audit process concerning the requirements of appropriate safety and security standards.

5. My AEO certificate or my C-TPAT account has been suspended/revoked. Do I still get benefits under a MRA?

No. Only active AEOs or C-TPAT members with a valid status are eligible to receive any potential benefits out of a MRA.

6. Do the benefits differ for AEOC and AEOF?

No. As both certificates cover the security requirements, there will be no difference in the benefits granted to holders of AEOC or AEOF.

7. Who benefits from lower risk scores and therefore fewer physical controls?

Due to the decision the AEO status is favourably taken into account for physical and document based controls related to security and safety. This benefit is currently provided to operators that can be identified by CBP targeting systems through their Manufacturer Identification Number (MID), i.e. AEO manufacturers and exporters.

8. Does an AEO certified manufacturer benefit from reduced risk scores?

Manufacturers and/or suppliers get a reduced risk score in the U.S. CBP targeting system which is conveyed through a Manufacturer Identification Number (MID). Once the "matching procedure" to associate the EU EORI (Economic Operators Registration and Identification) number with MID number is completed, AEO certified manufacturers are afforded this benefit by CBP.

9. Does an AEO certified exporter benefit from reduced risk scores?

Yes. As defined in the EU Customs code, an exporter is the person on whose behalf the export declaration is made and is the owner of the goods or has a similar right of disposal over them at the time when the declaration is accepted.

In that capacity, the exporter creates its own MID number and provides that MID number to CBP following U.S. Government guidelines.

10. Does an AEO custom broker benefit from reduced risk scores under a MRA?

No. For the time being, this benefit applies only to EU exporters and manufacturers.

11. Does an AEO certified freight forwarder benefit from reduced risk scores?

An AEO freight forwarder might benefit *indirectly* from a reduced risk score if the manufacturer/exporter of the goods that are exported is an AEO. By using the MID of the AEO manufacturer/exporter in the entry summary declaration the entire supply chain will benefit from the reduced risk score.

12. Does an AEO or C-TPAT certified sea or air carrier benefit from reduced risk scores?

Not on an automated basis. In the U.S., for instance, the only identifiers that CBP's targeting system can read and enforce are the Importer of Record Number (IOR – only for U.S. importers) and the MID number (only for manufacturers and or exporters). Due to the lack of an identifier, AEO carriers are not automatically recognised in CBP's Targeting Systems. However, their risk is mitigated in a secondary, manual intervention stage, of the risk analysis process by CBP.

13. Does an AEO third party logistic provider, agent, and other operator benefit from reduced risk scores?

No. This benefit applies only to EU exporters and manufacturers.

14. Are C-TPAT revalidation visits of AEO certified members in the EU still necessary?

No. C-TPAT revalidation visits in the EU on AEOF and AEOS companies are no longer necessary and have therefore come to an end.

Operators in the US

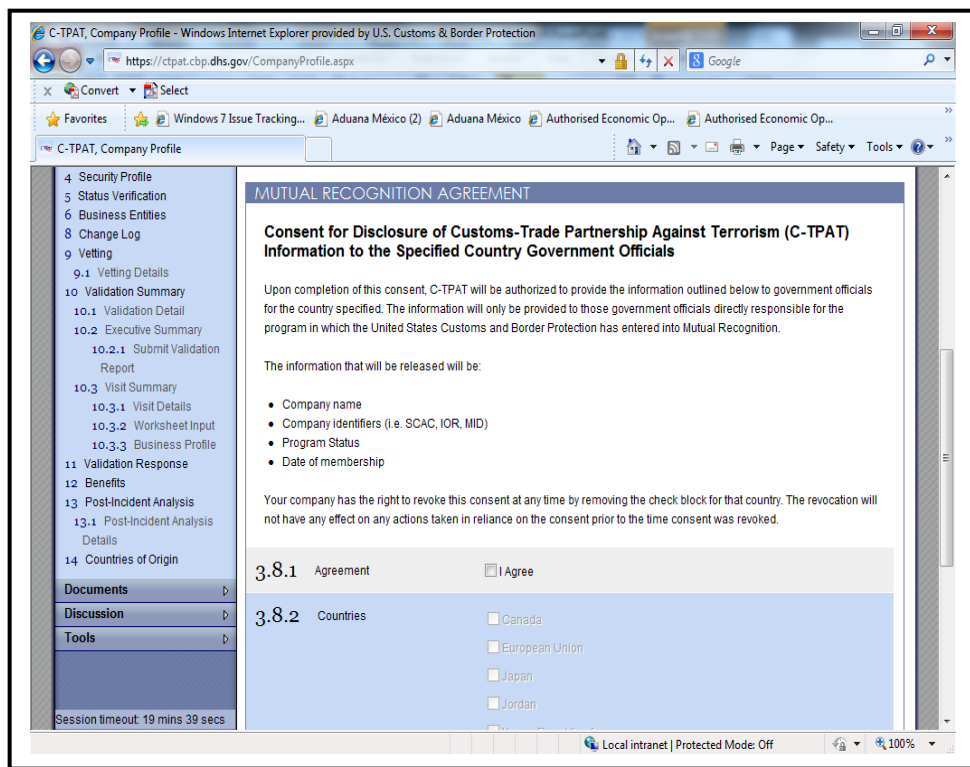
Before the introduction of the full-scale C-TPAT export programme, C-TPAT importers that also export can also benefit from this Decision by giving their consent to C-TPAT so that U.S. CBP may legally exchange programme information with customs administrations that CBP has signed an MRA with.

Additionally, importer members that also export to the EU need to sign the Export Statement in section 2.19 of the C-TPAT Portal in order to receive a reduction in their targeting score in EU risk management systems.

1. How can I provide my company's consent to C-TPAT in order to benefit from this and other MRAs?

Sign on to the C-TPAT Portal and go to Company Profile. Then go to Section 3.8 and select "I Agree" in section 3.8.1. Once that box is selected, country selections will be highlighted for you to select as many countries as you think appropriate.

If you expect benefits from the MR Decision between the US and the EU, you must check the "EU" box.



On the C-TPAT member homepage, you must click the "View/Edit EU Details" button.

Assigned SCSS	test scss
Company Profile Last Modified	01/11/2013
Security Profile Last Modified	01/28/2013
Export Operations	Register Export Operations
Exporter to EU	View/Edit EU Details
Print Security Profile	Print Company Profile

Companies must then enter their information in each section, or can click the “Copy Partner Information to Exporter Form” button. After all information has been entered, click the “Submit” button.

2. As a C-TPAT Tier I company, do I enjoy any benefits under the Decision?

Yes. If your company needs to undergo a foreign validation site visit and the local facility (factory, for instance) is AEOS or AEOF, then that C-TPAT foreign site visit may not be necessary as C-TPAT will accept the status of that company as an AEO and as such, complying with C-TPAT’s security criteria.

However, Tier I C-TPAT importers, when exporting to the EU, will not be given a reduction in their targeting score in the EU until they become Tier II.

3. As a C-TPAT importer at the Tier II and Tier III level, what else do I need to do to be able to be afforded additional benefits under this and other MRAs?

One of the benefits under any partnership programme with a security component –such as the EU’s AEO programme and C-TPAT – is that programme members get a reduction in their risk scores. This reduction is applied at the container level and once applied it translates into less physical examinations and controls.

Both the EU and the US are providing this benefit to both importer and exporter members at home and abroad.

C-TPAT importer members that also export to the EU and hope to enjoy a reduction in their targeting score once their exports reach any of the 27 Member States in the EU need to sign on to the C-TPAT Portal and go to Section 2.19 – Export Summary Section. They then need to read and agree to the following Export Statement:

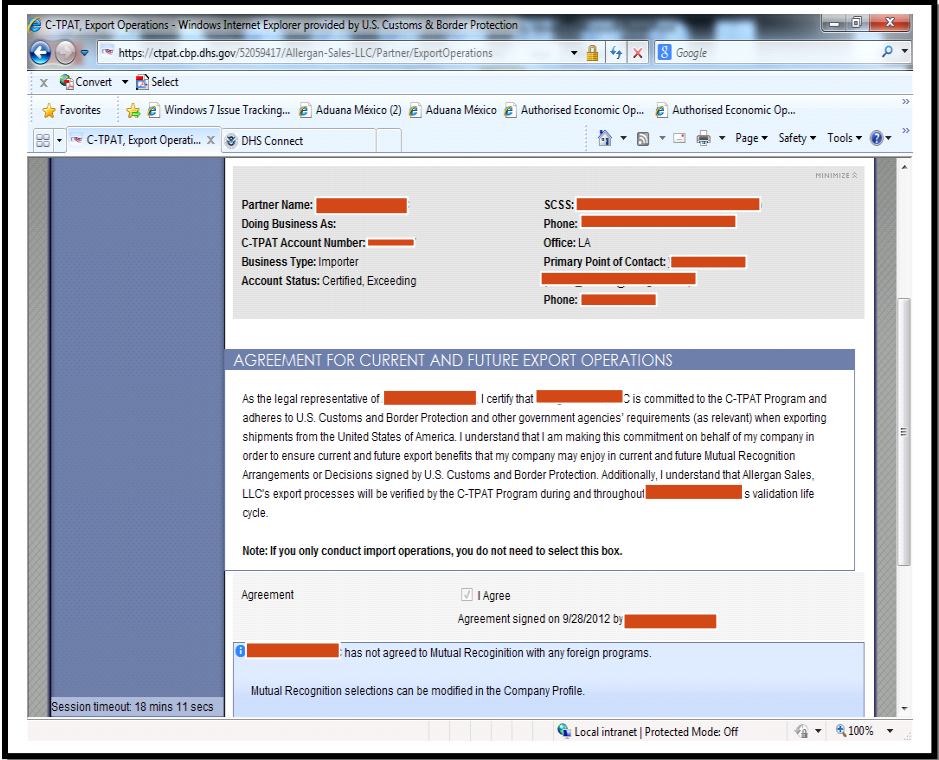
As the legal representative of COMPANY NAME, I certify that

COMPANY NAME is committed to the C-TPAT Programme and adheres to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other government agencies' requirements (as relevant) when exporting shipments from the United States of America. I understand that I am making this commitment on behalf of my company in order to ensure current and future export benefits that my company may enjoy in current and future Mutual Recognition Arrangements or Decisions signed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Additionally, I understand that COMPANY NAME's export processes will be verified by the C-TPAT Programme during and throughout COMPANY NAME's validation life cycle.

Only C-TPAT certified and validated importer members (Tiers II and III) will be able to see this Export Statement.

Only "Company Officers" may agree to this statement on behalf of the company.

If the Company Officer agrees to it, he or she needs to click on the "I Agree" box. The system will automatically stamp a date when the agreement was submitted to CBP.



4. Who will benefit from lower risk scores and therefore fewer physical controls?

Due to the decision the C-TPAT status is favourably taken into account for physical and document based controls related to security and safety. This benefit will be provided to all operators that are identifiable through the Entry Summary Declaration (ENS) in the Import Control System (ICS) (starting with the exporter). Their C-TPAT status (as well as the AEO status) will be taken favourably into account in the EU customs risk management processes. Nevertheless, the level of risk score reduction can vary depending on the role and responsibility of the C-TPAT member in the particular supply chain.

5. How will a C-TPAT manufacturer benefit from lower risk scores?

A manufacturer can only benefit from fewer controls if he also acts as exporter of the transaction. (->question related to C-TPAT exporters)

6. How will a C-TPAT exporter benefit from lower risk scores?

For the time being, only C-TPAT importers that also export are eligible to benefit from lower risk scores. They have to give their consent to the exchange of information with Third Countries and sign the export declaration (see Section "Operators in the US", page 8).

Those eligible C-TPAT importers who also export, will be able to identify themselves in the "consignor" field in the ENS with their C-TPAT/EORI like number. They will be recognised in the customs risk management system of ICS and receive a lower risk score.

7. How will a C-TPAT customs broker benefit from lower risk scores?

For the time being, C-TPAT customs brokers are not eligible to directly benefit from lower risk scores.

8. How will a C-TPAT freight forwarder benefit from lower risk scores?

For the time being, C-TPAT freight forwarders are not eligible to directly benefit from lower risk scores.

9. How will a C-TPAT carrier benefit from lower risk scores?

For the time being C-TPAT carriers are not eligible to directly benefit from lower risk scores.

10. How will a C-TPAT operator Third Party Logistic Provider (3PL), Agent, or other benefit from lower risk scores?

For the time being, those parties are not eligible to directly benefit from lower risk scores.

What is the MR web application and how should I use it?

CBP's targeting system cannot process the EU EORI number. It can only process information linked to a Manufacturer's Identification Number (MID) or an Importer of Record Number.

In order for AEO manufacturers and exporters to get a reduction in their targeting score in CBP's targeting system, a "matching procedure" to associate EORI numbers and MID numbers has been established. U.S. CBP has created a web application where AEO manufacturers/exporters may register their EORI numbers and associate them with their MID number(s).

This application may be accessed at: <https://mrctpat.cbp.dhs.gov>

IMPORTANT: this applies only to manufacturing or exporting companies in the EU. Other EU AEOs do not need to register. Companies outside the EU may not register.

1. As an AEO, do I have to register on the MR web application?

Yes, but only if you are an EU AEOF or AEOS and if you are an EU manufacturer or exporter. If you are a member of an AEO programme in another country, you should not insert any information into the system.

If you are already exporting to the U.S., you will already have a MID number. Find out from your U.S. customs broker or carrier what that number is.

2. As an AEOF or AEOS manufacturer or exporter in the EU, how do I register on the web application?

The detailed procedure to be followed is described in the Power Point Presentation provided by CBP, which can be accessed through this link:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/c-tpat.pdf

3. How do I enter the EORI number on the web application?

The EORI number is composed of a 2-digit Country Indicator and several alphanumeric characters. It is important to fill in the EORI number in the format country code plus the other characters even if the field 1.2 "EU member state" was already filled in.

4. Examples of common errors that can lead to the rejection of your application on the web application:

- a. The use of slash and other special characters
- b. The use of spaces between the characters
- c. A confusion between the number "0" and the letter "O"
- d. The AEOF or AEOS company has not provided its consent to the exchange of information with third countries for the purposes of MR

5. What is the "primary address"?

The EU AEO must indicate the address provided to customs for the purpose of mutual recognition (i.e. the so-called MRA address). In case an AEO is not aware of which address was provided for this purpose, the EU AEO is advised to contact the customs administration of the Member State that issued the AEO certificate.

6. For which purpose is the MID (Manufacturer Identification Number) used/necessary?

Manufacturers and exporters need a MID number when exporting goods to the U.S. As CBP's targeting system can only grant benefits based on the information that is linked to a MID number, there is a need for a "matching procedure" to associate the EU EORI (Economic Operators Registration and Identification) numbers with U.S. MID numbers.

Once the association between the EORI number and the MID number(s) has been established, AEOF and AEOS manufacturers and exporters will get the reduction in their targeting score automatically each time their business partner in the U.S. uses the MID number in U.S. entry declarations.

7. I am a manufacturer/exporter – how do I get a MID number?

- I am already exporting goods to the U.S.:

An EU AEO already exporting to the U.S. will have a MID number attributed to it. In case the AEO is not aware of its MID, the AEO is advised to contact its business partner in the U.S. to find out what MID number(s) has/have been attributed to this company in the U.S..

- I am exporting to the U.S. for the first time:

Liaise with your U.S. business partner to create a MID number.

8. How do I create a MID number?

Only AEOF and AEOS manufacturers and exporters in the EU should follow these guidelines when creating MID numbers and only if a new MID is necessary, i.e. the company will start exporting to the U.S. For those companies that are already exporting to the U.S., it is recommended that these companies liaise with their business partner in the U.S. to find out what their MID number(s) is/are.

Link: http://forms.cbp.gov/pdf/7501_instructions.pdf

(Appendix 20, page 30, 31)

9. I am NOT an AEOF or AEOS manufacturer or exporter. Do I need to register in the CBP web application?

No. The web application was designed only for AEOF and AEOS manufacturers and exporters.

10. What should I do if I have more than one MID number?

In this case it is necessary to match the operator's EORI number to each of these MID numbers in order to receive a favourable treatment benefit irrespective of the specific MID number used in the U.S. It is important that the address filled in the application is exactly the same as the one used to create that MID number.

There is not one MID for each company. MID numbers are based upon a manufacturer's specific address. So companies that own multiple facilities will have multiple MID numbers.

11. How are MIDs constructed?

- MIDs may be up to 15 characters:
- First 2 characters are the country code
- Next 3 are the 1st 3 characters of the 1st name (manufacturer)
- Next 3 are the 1st 3 characters of the 2nd name (manufacturer)
- Next 4 are the 1st 4 numbers in the street address
- Last 3 are the 1st 3 characters of the city name

Keep in mind that MIDs do not have to be 15 characters and there could be some criteria that doesn't apply. For example, if a company (manufacturer) does not have a second name or if the company address has less than 4 numbers in their street address. Also, the person creating the MID may use abbreviations for the company name, street, and/or city.

Hypothetical MID(s) example:

Bigtime Computers owns and operates 4 different manufacturing facilities in the EU. Each manufacturing facility will have its own MID number.

Name of Company: Bigtime Computers

Number of different Bigtime Computers manufacturing facilities: 4

Number of MIDs Bigtime Computers will have: at least 4

- Locations of manufacturing facilities:
- 1234 Fake Street, Barcelona, Spain
 - 3322 Down Street, Madrid, Spain
 - 67 Spring Street, Rome, Italy
 - 444 Winter Drive, Milan, Italy

Each of those facilities will have its own MID assigned to them based on the company name and address.

Examples of MIDs:

Barcelona, Spain:	ESBIGCOM1234BAR
Madrid, Spain	ESBIGCOM3322MAD
Frankfurt, Germany	ITBIGCOM67ROM
Berlin, Germany	ITBIGCOM444MIL

12. In which cases do I need more than one MID number?

If your company owns multiple manufacturing facilities you have multiple MID numbers, one for each one of them.

In principle, it shouldn't be possible to have more than one MID per manufacturing facility address. However, in the unlikely case that different US customs brokers have assigned different MID numbers for the same manufacturing facility address please clarify with your brokers to make sure that one unique number is in use for a specific address.

13. How are MID numbers reported to US CBP, registered and maintained?

MID Numbers are registered with CBP and maintained in their internal automated database.

14. Is duplication of registration avoided?

Duplicate MID numbers are not possible. If someone tries to create a number that already exists, it will be made known to CBP and whoever is trying to create that number. That is why it is vital for the foreign exporter to designate one MID number per facility address to be used for all future exports.

15. How can a US broker verify if a MID number already exists?

The broker verifies the MID number through their Automated Broker Interface (ABI) system. The system should notify the broker if a MID number is on file with CBP.

16. Is there a possibility for me to verify my MID number(s) via a database?

CBP does not have a searchable database; however a Customs Broker does have the capability through their ABI system. The query process may be a little different amongst brokers because each uses a different software vendor.

17. Which companies can get a MID number?

Only manufacturers and exporters outside the U.S. are eligible to receive a MID number. A MID number is required for all shipments to the United States. Since the Decision covers the U.S. and the EU, only manufacturers and exporters in one of the 27 Member States of the EU need a MID number and are eligible to receive benefits through their MID numbers.

Technical Questions Regarding Access to the Web Application

1. I have forgotten my password

Return to the logon page <https://mrctpat.cbp.dhs.gov/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f> and click the "Forgot your password?" link next to the Login button. Follow the instructions to re-set your password in order to have a new link sent to you.

2. I have difficulties accessing the web application portal (Error messages)

Sometimes a Microsoft Windows update may have an impact on your computer's security settings and affect your ability to connect to the C-TPAT Portal. Through the following link you will have access to the instructions for how to fix this problem:

http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/trade/cargo_security/ctpat/ctpat_portal/portal_error.ctt/portal_error.pdf

If fixing your security settings doesn't work, you could be part of the affected group of Internet Explorer users that have a problem related to security certificates in the Internet Explorer web browser.

Microsoft has taken measures to fix this problem. Please install the following Microsoft patch, or use another web browser (preferably Mozilla Firefox).

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/968730>

Audits/Validations

1. How will the proper implementation of the Decision be monitored in practice?

To ensure that both programmes continue to live up to the expectations of the MRA, each programme will continue to observe the validation or audit process of the other programme. These monitoring validation or audit visits will take place in both the U.S. and the EU. Each party expects to conduct two or three validation or audit visits annually.

2. Will there be any changes to the validation/audit process of the participants of both programmes?

No. Each competent customs authority will continue to perform the checks (validations/audits and re-validations/assessments) on the companies that are located in its territory.

Help Desks / Contact Points

European Union

European Commission:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/aeo/index_en.htm

Member States:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/aeo_contacts_for_traders_en.pdf

Competent Customs Authorities Query:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/dds2/eos/cca_consultation.jsp?Lang=en

United States

Website: www.cbp.gov/ctpat

E-mail: Industry.Partnership@dhs.gov

MR E-mail: mutual.recognition@cbp.dhs.gov

Phone: 202-344-1180

Table of Abbreviations

AEO	Authorised Economic Operator
AEOC	AEO certificate – Customs Simplifications
AEOS	AEO certificate – Security and Safety
AEOF	AEO certificate – Customs Simplifications/Security and Safety
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
C-TPAT	Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism
ENS	Entry Summary Declaration
EORI	Economic Operator Registration Identification
EU	European Union
ICS	Import Control System
MID	Manufacturer Identification Number
MR	Mutual Recognition
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement/Arrangement
MS	Member State of the EU. The 27 MS are: Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria, Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; and the United Kingdom.
TAXUD	European Commission, Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union
WCO	World Customs Organization
WCO SAFE	World Customs Organization's <i>Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade</i>