



**Sri Lanka Customs
Special News
Time Release Study 2018**

Sri Lanka Customs released the findings of its second Time Release Study (TRS) conducted in 2018, which measures and reports the times taken by Customs and other stakeholders (SLPA, SAGT, SLSI, Plant Quarantine, etc.) to release imported cargo from Customs control.

It is obvious that the time taken for clearance of goods has a direct impact on the costs to trade. The seamless and expeditious clearance of import, export and transit goods from designated ports and airports with minimized hassle at barriers, will be much beneficial to legitimate trade and would clearly have a direct impact on the reduction of trade costs.

The TRS is a universally accepted method recommended by the World Customs Organization (WCO) to measure the time taken by authorities to release import cargo and ship export cargo from Customs control, and is recognized as a mean of identifying bottlenecks and improving performance in import/export processes. The main objective of such exercise is to take remedial actions to improve the efficiencies of Customs and Other Governmental border Agencies (OGA) considering that time has a big impact on cost. 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).

Additional Director General of Customs - Revenue and Services (ADGC-R&S), Mr. Sunil Jayarathne said it was pleasing to witness considerable reduction in the average FCL throughput time reported at certain processes which have been identified as bottlenecks during the first TRS in 2014 and remedied concurrently with TRS 2018. Further, significant progress has been recorded at the Export Facilitation Center. He attributed these improvements largely to the efforts of Customs, Trade Related Agencies and other partners working together to achieve a seamless flow of cross-border trade.

The first TRS of Sri Lanka Customs was conducted in the year 2014 focusing on the Import Sea Cargo FCL process (only within the Customs context). The results of TRS 2018 revealed that the average time from arrival to release for Import Sea Cargo FCL was approximately 16 hours and 29 minutes, an improvement of 11 hours and 31 minutes from 2014.

In particular, the average Customs procedure time, from Customs declaration processing and ultimate release from Customs control, is as follows. Each element has greatly improved as a consequence of efforts aimed at trade facilitation.

Category		Process Time	Idle Time	Total Throughput Time	Total Throughput Time of TRS 2014	Improvement
Import Sea Cargo FCL		8 hr 31 min	7 hr 59 min	16 hr 29 min	28 hr	11 hr 31 min
Import Sea Cargo LCL		5 hr 05 min	3 hr 05 min	8 hr 10 min	Not Considered	-
Import Air Cargo		1 hr 50 min	1 hr 37 min	3 hr 27 min		
Export – EFC		9 min	41 min	50 min		
Export Air Cargo		1 hr 14 min	42 min	1 hr 56 min		
Motor Vehicle	Colombo	3 hr 06 min	4 hr 10 min	7 hr 16 min		
	Hambantota	5 hr 26 min	1 hr 25 min	6 hr 51 min		

ADGC-R&S acknowledged trade's contribution to the *TRS-2018*, in particular, Container Terminal Operators (SLPA, SAGT, etc.), Container Examination Yards (GL-I, GL-II, RCT) and Other Governmental border Agencies (SLSI, Plant Quarantine, etc.), for their tremendous support, commitment and contribution.

It is also intended that regular TRSs continue to be conducted. The next TRS of Sri Lanka Customs which is supposed to be conducted in a more comprehensive and effective manner will be a crucial tool for future improvements in border procedures. All such endeavours will create avenues in order to form a transparent environment and will bring mutual benefits to the country in increasing tax revenue and reducing costs to trade.

The *TRS-2018 Report* can be downloaded from the Sri Lanka Customs website:
[http://www.customs.gov.lk/public/files/ppr/Time Release Study Report final.pdf](http://www.customs.gov.lk/public/files/ppr/Time_Release_Study_Report_final.pdf)

Media enquiries:

For further details contact;

Mr. Sunil Jayarathne

Additional Director General of Customs (ADGC)

WCO- Customs Technical and Operational Advisor in the area of TRS

+94 777512213

E-mail: jaysunil123@ymail.com

Mr. Achala Chandrasekare

Deputy Director of Customs

TRS-2018 Team Leader

E-mail: achalacustoms@gmail.com