15. COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE & STATISTICS

The Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S) is the nodal agency of the Government of India responsible for collection, compilation and dissemination of Trade Statistics and various types of commercial information required by policy makers, researchers, importers, exporters, traders as well as overseas buyers. Over the years, DGCI&S has been making utmost efforts to release the foreign trade data in time and to create reliable and detailed data-base to facilitate the formulation, implementation and modification of India’s trade policy and planning in the field of export promotion and efficient import management. DGCI&S made a significant progress in releasing the provisional foreign trade data of aggregate exports and imports by major commodity/country and port. Presently, the Press Release and Quick Estimates of principal commodities for Exports and Imports are prepared within two weeks from the close of the reference month. These are very useful for making overall assessment of India’s foreign trade in advance by the Government and to study the impact of various trade policies. A brochure titled as “Foreign Trade Statistics of India (Principal Commodities & Countries) containing provisional data is released thereafter. The detailed statistics at 8-digit level of ITC (HS) are being published in the form of CD-ROM with continuous efforts to make it timely.

The Directorate brings out a number of publications mainly on Inland and Coastal Trade Statistics, Revenue Statistics, Shipping and Air-cargo Statistics etc., which are utilized by the government departments as well as by the trading communities and researchers. Directory of Indian Exporters published by DGCI&S is a valuable document for the foreign buyers. The Indian Trade Journal, a weekly publication brought out by DGCI&S, is a repository of material of commercial interest as well as a major channel for flow of information on tenders at the National and International level. DGCI&S also helps in the settlement of Commercial Disputes and maintains a Commercial Library, which serves a vast clientele. A list of the important publications issued by DGCI&S is at Appendix- IX.

DATA CAPTURE

The Daily Trade Returns (DTRs), forming the source document for foreign trade data, are received from major customs houses thru SCPC VSAT and 512 kbps leased line in EDI & NONEDI form. The data from minor ports are received through E-mail/ Floppies. The DTRs so received are put through a series of coverage checking and cleaning operations. A monitoring-cum-feed back system has been in operation for improving the quality and coverage of data received from custom houses. The data relating to major customs houses cover about 80% to 85% of India’s total Foreign trade while the rest of the data are received from places such as Land Customs Stations, ICDs, EPZ and medium & minor sea and airport custom units.

DATA PROCESSING

DGCI&S data processing system is built on ORACLE database in SUN ULTRA E-450 system. Its computer system is having networking facilities both in-house and with outside world. A dedicated SCPC VSAT installed is being used to receive the DTR data online from computerised Customs houses. Besides, a dedicated 512 kbps leased line also facilitates uninterrupted receipt of DTRs. An Exchange Server is also installed for providing Internet/E-mail facilities to various computers in the local net work. While 21 major ports transmit data through VSAT/Leased line The other computerized ports are sending DTR data on floppies/E-mail. The DTRs are then passed through a series of coverage checking and cleaning operations at the EDP unit of DGCI&S. With switching over from FTS processing to ORACLE based platform, the task of identification, retrieval and correction of errors in DTRs has become easier at DGCI&S. Foreign Trade data processing is fully computerized with menu driven front-end software using client server architecture of ORACLE RDBMS. Online editing facility has been provided to the Export/Import branches for easy retrieval and correction of errors in DTRs directly to the database. Every branch of the Directorate is equipped with computers and connected with the
LAN. All the staff of the Directorate are trained in PC-based operations. The Website of the directorate www.dgciskol.nic.in is developed and launched successfully. The Website is having two parts namely static pages and dynamic pages. The static pages of the website mainly consist of history of DGCI&S and its various activities in brief. These pages contain summary data on principal commodities, chapters, sections, economic regions and countries and updated regularly. Since April 2003 the site provides free access to revised Custom Tariff Code Classification implemented in DGCI&S. The dynamic pages of website are mainly for on-line data dissemination and provide access on both free and payment basis. This section contains latest 24 months final foreign trade data at 8-digit commodity and principal commodity level and updated regularly. The website also contain exporter and importer directory in a user-friendly format. With the launching of the website of DGCI&S, the users benefit much more with online data dissemination. Upto March 2003 issues, the foreign trade publication were released in printed form. However, from April 2003 issue onwards till date, data are being released in electronic media viz. CDs.

**DATA DISSEMINATION**

The Foreign Trade Data as generated by DGCI&S are disseminated mainly through (1) Monthly Press Release, (2) Foreign Trade Statistics of India (Principal Commodities and Countries), (3) Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India – (i) Volume I (Export) & (ii) Volume II (Import) and (4) Statistics of Foreign Trade of India by Countries.

In the first stage, a Monthly Press Note containing India’s aggregate data on exports and imports is compiled along with quick estimates for exports and imports within two weeks from the close of a particular reference month. A monthly Brochure titled “Foreign Trade Statistics of India (Principal Commodities and Countries)” is issued to meet immediate requirements of the Ministry and other Government organizations, Commodity Boards, EPCs, Research Organisations etc. This Brochure inter-alia provides provisional Commodity-wise, Country-wise and Port-wise foreign trade information.

The detailed data on India’s Foreign Trade are published through “Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India” containing commodity by country details The data in this publication is given at the 8-digit level codes of the Indian Trade Classification (Harmonised System).

**PRICED INFORMATION SERVICE SYSTEM (PISS)**

Data are disseminated among the private parties, EPCs, Commodity Boards, Foreign Embassies, etc. on payment basis under a special scheme called “Priced Information Service System (PISS)”. Under this scheme, the users are to pay Rs.1/- per unit record of information. Under this system, the users are not supplied the whole basket of 8-digit Commodity-Country Data for any particular period for reasons of ‘Copy Right’ provision of DGCI&S. DGCI&S, under an agreement, provides aggregate and detailed data to Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy for an efficient Trade Intelligence Service.

Department of Commerce has permitted DGCI&S to provide transaction wise import data for anti-dumping cases, to private bodies by suppressing commercial information / identification of importers after proper authentication by DGAD. The same cost structure is followed.

**QUICK ESTIMATES**

DGCI&S also makes available quick estimates on (a) aggregate data of export and import and (b) principal commodities to the government to facilitate an assessment of India’s Foreign Trade performance scenario in advance as well as to study the impact of various Trade Policies.

**INDEX NUMBERS OF FOREIGN TRADE OF INDIA**

The Indices of Unit Value and Quantum of Foreign Trade of India as well as the ‘terms of trade’ are compiled on a regular basis and the indices with base year 1978-79, have been worked out till March, 1998. On account of the changes in the Indian Trade Classification since April, 1987, the old commodity baskets have been recast to suit the new classification system for computation of index number series besides maintaining temporal comparability since the base year 1978-79 is too old to serve its purpose. A decision has been taken to
change the base period from 1978-79 to 1998-99. It was also decided that besides bringing out global monthly index numbers, country-wise Index Number would also to be issued for selected countries. The commodity baskets for global and country-wise index numbers separately for export and import have been prepared. The work relating to compilation of Index Numbers with base year 1998-99 is in progress.

COMMERCIAL DISPUTES

The Trade Dispute Reconciliation Section of DGCI&S, Kolkata receives complaints and disputes relating to Foreign Trade from four categories of complainants for resolution. Generally, the disputes are referred to the DGCI&S, Kolkata office by the Indian Diplomatic Mission abroad, the officers of Reserve Bank of India, Export Promotion Councils, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations representing the Government and non-Government sectors.

During the financial year 2003-04, the DGCI&S, Kolkata office received seven new cases referred by the Indian Diplomatic offices abroad. Upon examination of the disputes five cases, both old and new, were referred to the jurisdictional Zonal authorities of the DGFT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India, for final decision. Three cases were examined in DGCI&S, Kolkata office, and final decisions were communicated to the concerned parties and the Indian Diplomatic Missions.

During the current financial year 2004-2005 (till November), three new cases of disputes have been received. Two cases were referred to Indian High Commission office, Colombo, Sri Lanka, as these were found to be fit for local conciliation only under the HCI, Colombo.

COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Many manufacturer-exporters lack access to necessary information regarding overseas buyers. Commercial Intelligence Branches of DGCI&S bridges the information gap by providing the Indian exporters with names and addresses of foreign importers. The Commercial Intelligence Branches are equipped with the whole gamut of trade information relating to foreign exporters’ and importers’ addresses, possibilities of trade in various commodities, India’s trade relations with its major partners, current international trade environment etc. The information is gleaned from varied sources such as inputs received from Indian missions abroad and material accessed from websites of national and international organizations. Thus the Branches assist and encourage the entrepreneurs, in their endeavours to look beyond nation’s frontiers.

The up-to-date data on overseas importers are, at present, being stored in MS Access database. The databases is constantly updated by sending special queries in respect of selected items and countries as per the requirements of Indian exporters.

Country-wise and commodity-wise trade information, indicating existing and potential markets for different items in countries is provided to the potential Indian exporters for identifying their target overseas markets and choosing the most suitable exportable items.

The Commercial Intelligence Branches go beyond answering written queries and handle regular visitors with desk information on various aspects related to trade intelligence and thus seeks to builds up exporters’ and importers’ confidence in this Directorate.

Further more, Country Profiles containing general information, current economic indicators in brief and analysis of their respective trade performance in relation to India are prepared. A monthly review of foreign trade is compiled, showing imports and exports of major commodities, volume of trade with major trading partners and through major ports. This review is published in Indian Trade Journal.

The Branches also contribute a fortnightly article on international trade environment to the Indian Trade Journal to keep the trading community abreast of the current developments in the field of foreign trade.

Achievements during April 2004 to November 2004

During this period 258 trade enquiries, Indian and foreign, were received. All the enquiries were attended to, and the necessary information provided to the parties. Furthermore, desk information was provided to 117 visitors.
The Monthly Trade Review was compiled and sent to the Indian Trade Journal as and when final data was published. Articles on international trade environment are being sent to the Indian Trade Journal every month. Data entry for the preparation of a comprehensive Review of Foreign Trade has been done. The compilation and drafting are to be completed shortly. The preparation of the Country Profile of China is well under way.

COMMERCIAL LIBRARY

The Commercial Library, attached to the office of the DGCI & S is offering its services free of cost to general public since 1919. The Library offers personalized across-the-counter-reference service to its visitors/users. A vast number of users comprising traders, manufacturers, businessmen, industrialists, technologists, government officials, students, teachers and researchers from different colleges and universities and other educational institutions in India and from abroad, lawyers etc. avail this service. The total stock of the Library is constantly being enriched every year by acquisition of books & journals, important newspapers. Special collection of the Library includes documents published by the United Nations, UNCTAD/GATT/International Trade and other Statistical publications of different Foreign Government Organizations, Foreign Chambers of Commerce, Foreign Banks, etc.