



Government Undertakes Reforms to Strengthen Norms Committees under DGFT for Faster Disposal of Advance Authorisation Applications

Advance Authorisation and DFIA Schemes Enable Duty-Free Imports for Exporters under DGFT

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In pursuance of the Government's commitment to Ease of Doing Business and trade facilitation for exporters, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry has undertaken a series of targeted reforms to strengthen the functioning of Norms Committees (NCs) under the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). These measures are aimed at improving turnaround time, enabling early approvals and enhancing transparency and predictability under the Advance Authorisation (AA) Scheme.

DGFT administers the Advance Authorisation (AA) Scheme and the Duty-Free Import Authorisation (DFIA) Scheme under the Foreign Trade Policy. These schemes allow duty-free import of inputs that are physically incorporated in export products. Authorisations are generally issued against notified Standard Input Output Norms (SION). In cases where SION is not available, authorisations are issued based on self-declared input-output norms by applicants, which are subsequently examined and finalised by sector-specific Norms Committees.

At present, seven Norms Committees are operational under DGFT, covering a range of export sectors. These Committees comprise technical authorities and domain experts from relevant Ministries and Departments. They are responsible for fixation of SION and ad-hoc norms, recommending SION notifications and facilitating issuance of authorisations in accordance with the Foreign Trade Policy and Handbook of Procedures.

The functioning of NCs had been impacted by capacity constraints due to a limited number of Technical Authorities. As of early February 2026, only twelve technical members were associated with the Committees, including five serving Government officers, resulting in increasing pendency due to overlapping responsibilities.

To address these challenges, a series of reforms have been introduced:

Strengthening of Governance and Processes: Detailed guidelines have been issued to ensure uniformity and consistency in the functioning of NCs. These include institutionalised scheduling of meetings on a fixed fortnightly cycle, prioritisation of long-pending cases, time-bound finalisation of meeting minutes, and systematic monitoring of pendency and case ageing. Efforts have also been made to identify recurring cases for conversion into SION to reduce repetitive approvals.

Augmentation of Technical Capacity: Line Ministries have been requested to nominate additional technical officers to the Committees to enhance sectoral expertise and reduce dependence on a limited pool of members.

Special Disposal Drive: A special drive has been launched for expeditious disposal of pending applications, with meetings being held on a fixed schedule and cases taken up in chronological order to ensure transparency and fairness.

As part of capacity augmentation, ten additional technical members have been nominated from various Ministries, increasing the total number of Technical Authorities from 12 to 22. This has strengthened the Committees' ability to handle a higher volume of cases with improved efficiency.

The reforms have resulted in improved outcomes. Between January 2026 and 7 April 2026, a total of 38 meetings of Norms Committees were held, in which 3,925 cases were taken up and 1,770 cases were disposed of.

These measures are aligned with the Government's agenda of creating a facilitative and predictable trade environment, particularly for MSMEs. A streamlined norms fixation process is expected to reduce transaction costs, shorten authorisation timelines and enhance India's export competitiveness.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry remains committed to further improving the efficiency of the norms fixation mechanism as part of its broader efforts to support exporters and promote trade growth.

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