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## Trade Facilitation Program: Enhancements in Voluntary Compliance with Customs Regulations

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This alert is to update you on an additional trade facilitation program provided by the Vietnamese customs authority, available for Vietnamese-established enterprises.

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On 4 December 2024, the General Department of Customs (GDC) enacted Decision No. 2790/QĐ-TCHQ (Decision 2790) to introduce a trade facilitation program aimed at enhancing voluntary compliance with customs regulations for enterprises engaged in export, import, and transshipment activities (the Program).

This initiative aims to foster collaboration between customs authorities and businesses, facilitate trade operations, boost competitiveness, and lower compliance costs, with a strong emphasis on digital transformation for consistent administration.

Decision 2790 marks a significant milestone, transitioning from the pilot phase under Decision No. 1399/QĐ-TCHQ dated 15 July 2022 to full-scale implementation. Please refer to the key notes below.

Decision 2790 took effect on the date of issuance (4 December 2024).

## Objectives of the Program

- Maintain or upgrade customs compliance scores to Level 2 (very high compliance) or Level 3 (high compliance) for over 80% of participants.
- Achieve over 80% satisfaction rates among participants regarding customs support.
- Raise compliance scores of more than 20% of businesses to Levels 2 or 3 within five years.

## Required criteria for the Program

- **Current customs compliance score:** Levels 2 to 3 for certain customs departments (e.g., Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong, Ha Noi, Binh Duong, Bac Ninh, Dong Nai, Ha Nam Ninh, Long An), extending to Level 4 (moderate compliance) for the remaining.
- **Other selection criteria:** No recent violations, key operational metrics, trade volumes, customs duty contribution, etc. Thresholds are detailed in the Appendix of Decision 2790.
- **Onboarding process:** Qualified businesses must submit an application according to Form No. 1 (issued with this Decision) form for the Program to the GDC. The GDC will grant membership following a thorough review of the application and verification of required criteria. Membership may be revoked under certain circumstances.

## Customs support from the Program

- **Contact Points:** Designate appropriate contacts at various customs levels (sub-department, department, General Department) to address queries.
- **Response Time:** Requests are processed within 24 hours and forwarded to relevant units for action.
- **Areas of Support:** Address queries related to risk management, risk warning alerts, customs law compliance, and customs procedures via phone, email, or in writing.
- **Excellence of Customs Operations:** Delegate dedicated officers to assist members and collaborate with port and warehouse operators for efficient goods handling.
- **Priority Processing:** Expedite administrative procedures for members, including price consultation and goods classification.
- **Partnership Programs:** Collaborate with business associations and relevant organizations to enhance compliance and prevent violations.
- **Training and Workshops:** Organize sessions to help enterprises improve legal compliance and mitigate risks.

We strongly advise businesses to self-evaluate their qualifications for the Program and proactively apply for membership. This will help build a valuable professional network with customs authorities, sustain customs operations, and enhance customs compliance.

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