Government of India
Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue
Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs
Directorate General of Human Resource Development, HRM-I
Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, 2nd & 3rd Floor, Bhai Vir Singh Marg
Gole Market, New Delhi-110001

To,
Pr. Chief Commissioner/ Chief Commissioner, Customs and GST - (All),Pr. Director General /Director General -(All),
Pr. Commissioner/ Pr. ADG/ Commissioner/ ADG, Customs and GST - (All),
Chief Controller of Factories/ Narcotics Commissioner, Gwalior, Commissioner (Coordination),CBIC/ JS (Admin) CBIC, New Delhi.

Sir/Madam,

Subject: Online writing of APAR in SPARROW-CBIC for Group 'B' and 'C' Officers/Staff and "Other than IRS (C&IT) Group 'A' Officers" for the year 2024-25-reg.

Please refer to this office letter F.No- 8/DB/145/11RD(IIRM-II)/2017-Pt.II dated 15.05.2019 (available in DGHRD website) wherein detailed instructions have been issuedfor online writing of APAR in SPARROW-CBIC of "other than IRS (C&IT) Group A Officers" and "Group B & C" Officers/ Staff.

2. SPARROW-CBIC has been successfully implemented w.e.f. APAR Cycle 2018-19 for Cadres up to the rank of Head Havaldars and above (i.e., Grade Pay 1900 and above). However, **from APAR Cycle 2020-21, the online writing of APAR in SPARROW-CBIC has been extended to the Cadres of Havaldars and MTS as well.**

3. To facilitate the smoother implementation of APAR Cycle 2024-25, the following points may kindly be noted for compliance.

Updation of name/ role of Custodian and Alternate Custodian:

3.1. Updation of name/ role of Custodian and Alternate Custodian of all the formations in SPARROW-CBIC is an essential prerequisite for initiating online writing of APAR.

3.2. For smooth functioning of the module and timely disposal of requests, Role of **Super Custodian** has been allocated to the JC/ADC level officers in CCO/HQ of Zones/Directorates to ensure sanctity of the data and efficiency handling functionalities listed as below:

- Transfer of officers from one formation to another formation in SPARROW system through PIMS (initiate transfer, relieving employee, joining employee).
- Allocation of roles of Custodians and Alternate Custodians in SPARROW – CBIC (Role Mapping).
- Updation of Personal details of the officers through PIMS (Search Employee).

3.3. Since the role of Super Custodian is imperative, the Super Custodian should give the roles to the Custodian /Alternate Custodian as below:

- Custodian :
  1. PAR State Custodian(Primary)
  2. Dossier Access Authority
  3. Migration Authority
  4. PAR Administrator

- Alternate Custodian:
  1. PAR State Custodian (Alternate)
  2. Migration Authority

3.4 The lists of all the formations in SPARROW (for the purpose of online Performance Appraisal Reporting) and the respective Custodian and Alternate Custodian as on 22.03.2025 is available on DGHRD website. It is requested to examine the list and in case of any change being necessitated that suitable Officers may be nominated for the roles of Custodian and Alternate Custodian on priority **(Such requests should be sent to Super Custodians of respective formations. The requests can also be sent online through email at help.sparrowcbic@gov.in along with the approval letter from the competent authority; Manual/ Physical letters may not be sent).** It is suggested that Custodian should be Group B `Gazetted' Officer and Alternate Custodian should be any Group B Officer. In case, Officers presently assigned role/ charge of Custodian/ Alternate Custodian are not Group B `Gazetted/ Group B Officers, they may continue. It is also advised that while nominating Officers for the role of Custodian/ Alternate Custodian, preferably, they should be the Officers from Vigilance/ APAR Section. It should be ensured that any such officer nominated for the role of Custodian/ Alternate Custodian has at least over one year of service left so as to enable completion of full APAR Cycle 2024-25.

3.5 It is to mention that the role of Custodian/ Alternate Custodian is critical for successful completion of APAR cycle, hence the Custodian/ Alternate Custodian should be well conversant with the Computer/ ITSystems/ tech-savvy.

3.6. **SPARROW-CBIC is now only be accessible through Web VPN saccess.nic.in along with the tabs of eOffice CBIC and SPARROW-IRS.**

3.7. SPARROW-SEVA is not functional anymore. Hence, it is requested to kindly send all the request to email **help.sparrowcbic@gov.in** only.

3.8. GOV/NIC email id related work/portal has been delegated to DGPM, so far any issue/query related to GOV/NIC email id, concerned helpdesk may be contacted in DGPM.

3.9. **Nodal Officer for NRC and Representation:**

- In all the formations ("Formation" here means CCO/Directorate Hqrs or a setup headed by Commissioner/ ADG), the Officer holding the charge of AC/DC (P&V/ Vigilance/ Establishment/ Admin) shall be appointed as "Nodal Officer for NRC and Representation" for SPARROW-CBIC. For the purpose of creation of Workflow of NRCs and Representations in APAR workflow, only this Officer will be selected as "Competent Authority" for the Workflow of NRC as well as "CompetentAuthority Stage-I" and Competent Authority Stage-II for the Workflow of Representation.
- It may be noted that the NRC Approving Authority is present incumbent Commissioner for the Officers of the rank of Superintendent/other senior Officer (covered in SPARROW-CBIC) and present incumbent JC/ADC (P&V) for all other Group B & C Officers/Staff.
- It may also be noted that the Authority for deciding any representation is the present incumbent Officer holding the charge of one rank above the Reviewing Officer; If AC/DC is the Reviewing Officer, then, JC/ADC in the present Place of Posting/ Present Charge of the Officer Reported Upon will be the deciding authority for representation; if JC/ADC is the Reviewing Officer, then, Commissioner in the present Place of Posting of the Officer Reported Upon will be the representation deciding authority and if, Commissioner is the Reviewing Officer, then, Chief Commissioner will be the representation deciding authority. It will be the responsibility of "Nodal Officer for NRC and Representation"to examine all the NRC requests and Representations and put up the same toNRC approving Authority/ Representation Deciding Authority. After taking approval for NRC/ decision on representation, the Nodal Officer shallapprove/upload the NRC/representation order in SPARROW-CBIC by giving the File No./ other details etc, in which the NRC ApprovingAuthority/ Representation Deciding Authority has given the approval/ decision.

For example: If Shri ABC is AC (P&V) in respect of a Commissionerate, then while creating the NRC Workflow, Shri ABC should be selected as the "Competent

*Authority" by the Custodian for all the NRC requests and as "**Competent Authority Stage-I**" and "**Competent Authority Stage-II**" by the Custodian for all the Representations of that Commissionerate (in Representation part of APAR workflow). All such requests shall land into the SPARROW-CBIC account of Shri ABC, who shall then process all these NRCs/APAR Representations by taking the order from the NRC Approving Authority/ Representation Deciding Authority (as explained above) in file/ e-Office and shallupload the NRC/ Representation order in SPARROW-CBIC system by giving suitable reference of the File No. etc, in which the Order was taken.*

3.10. The role of the "Nodal Officer for NRC and Representation" is important. The said Nodal Officer is expected to process requests on daily basis. In case, the "Nodal Officer for NRC and Representation" gets transferred/ demits Office, it should be ensured that all the pendencies related to NRCs and Representations should be cleared/ disposed of by him/her before relinquishing his/her charge to avoid delay in APAR Cycle and other administrative problems. It may be noted that transfer of pendency from one account to another in the system is complex and has attendant issues.

3.11. **Logging into SPARROW-CBIC:** To access SPARROW-CBIC, the officer has to:

- Connect to SPARROW-CBIC through the URL: saccess.nic.in (eoffice) a new tab of SPARROW-CBIC will be visible. On clicking on the tab of SPARROW-CBIC, "**PARICHAY**" Portal will open for SPARROW-CBIC which can be open by using registered NIC email ID (with @nic.in or @gov.in) and password. If any Officer has forgot his password for the same, then the Option for "**FORGOT PASSWORD**" can be exercised to reset the Password.

- Login into SPARROW-CBIC would not be possible through Google search link. It may be mentioned that all the Group 'A' IRS (C&IT) Officers are having a separate account for SPARROW-CBIC (in addition to their account in SPARROW-IRS). For any work related to SPARROW-CBIC, they will have to login into the SPARROW-CBIC account through the above mentioned steps.

- The other option for Group 'A' IRS (C&IT) Officers to access SPARROW-CBIC is by click on 'eoffice - UNIFIED' tab available along with SPARROW-CBIC and SPARROW-IRS on web VPN.

4. APAR Timelines for 2024-25 as prescribed by DoPT vide OM No. 21011/1/2005-Est(A) (Part II) dated 23.07.2009 needs to be strictly adhered to. In addition to reiterating the timelines, the following are instructions for strict compliance for the APAR Cycle 2024-25 in SPARROW-CBIC.

4.1. The Administration/ Establishment/ Vigilance Section of each formation (Zone/ Commissionerate/ Directorate) shall furnish the complete details as required in Section-I of the APAR duly verified by **25th March, 2025** to the Custodian/ Alternate Custodian. Special care should be taken to ensure the correctness of the **Names & period of supervision** by each of the Reporting & Reviewing officers and that these details are covering complete period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. The correctness and completeness of this information is essential to decide the creation of APAR/ NRC by the Custodian/ Alternate Custodian. These details are to be filled in respect of all the Officers/ Staff who are working in the particular formation as on date including for the officers who have gone on long leave / training / foreign assignment from that formation.

4.2. Based on the details submitted by the Administration Section, the Custodian/ Alternate Custodian shall ensure to create the workflow of all the Officers/ Staff after logging into the SPARROW- CBIC. It is also clarified that the Custodian/ Alternate Custodian has to create the workflow in respect of all the Officers/ Staff working under his formation including the officers on Long leave/Training /Foreign assignment However, in case of Long Leave/ Training/ Foreign assignment, appropriate workflow for NRC /Foreign Assignment Note is to be created.

4.3. While creating workflow for APAR, three crucial things that need to be filled in are – Assessment period (specific period for which APAR is being created), Form type and Status (APAR/NRC/Foreign Assignment). For creation of workflow for part period PAR, it should be kept in mind that period of Workflow under the heading assessment period selected by Custodian/Alternate Custodian should be specific to that part period only (Exact dates). If this is not done, PAR/NRC for the uncovered subsequent period cannot be generated.

4.4. The workflows created by the Alternate Custodian will be automatically available with the Custodian. The Custodian should carefully examine if the Workflow created for APAR/ NRC/ Foreign Assignment is correct based on details given by Administration Section and if Workflow needs amendment, he should delete the Workflow and create the new Workflow. The Custodian should complete all the details in Section-I and save it. Care should be taken in filling the name &correct period of supervision by Reporting & Reviewing officers in the table pertaining to details of the Reporting/Reviewing officers. The Custodian should complete Section-I in respect of all the Officers/ Staff in the formation and save it so that the APAR can be generated and sent to the Officers Reported Upon electronically after e-signing latest by **31st March, 2025.**

4.5. It will be the responsibility of the Custodian to ensure that the PAR is generated

electronically in respect of all the Officers/ Staff who are working in the formation as on date including for the officers who have gone on long leave/ training / foreign assignment from that formation.

4.6. The PAR generated shall be available in the inbox of the Officer Reported Upon. He/she should complete Self-Appraisal in Section-II in all respects and forward the same to the Reporting officer after e-signing by **15th April, 2025**. In case, the officer does not forward his APAR timely, it will be force forwarded in system to the Reporting Officer for appraisal without resume/ self appraisal.

4.7. The Reporting Officer shall appraise the officer reported upon in Section III of APAR, complete in all aspects and forward the APAR to the Reviewing Officer after e-signing by **30th June,2025**. In case, the Reporting Officer does not forward the APAR timely to Reviewing Officer, it will be force forwarded in system to the Reviewing Officer for appraisal.

4.8. The Reviewing Officer shall appraise the officer reported upon in Section III of APAR for numerical gradings (against all individual/ overall attributes) and complete Section IV in all respects and forward the APAR to the Custodian after e-signing by **31st July, 2025**. In case, theReviewing Officer does not appraise the APAR timely, he will forfeit his right to review the APAR and the APAR shall be force forwarded in system from Reviewing Authority to theCustodian (CR Section) for disclosure to the Concerned Officer (Officer Reported Upon).

4.9. The Custodian shall disclose the completed APAR to the Officer Reported Upon electronically latest by **01st September, 2025**. The officer reported upon may view the APAR and may either accept it or choose to represent. If the Officer accepts the APAR, then he will accept the same in the system and then the APAR will once again go back to Custodian (CR Section) for Closure; the Custodian shall finally close the APAR and thereby the APAR would attain finality. If the officer does not accept the APAR, he can represent to the **Competent Authority** online alongwith any reference document in support of his representation within 15 days of communication in'MY PAR' Tab. It may be noted that for the purpose of workflow of Representation (in PAR workflow), the Reporting Officer and Reviewing Officer will be the same as already selected inStandard PAR Workflow and the Officer nominated as "Nodal Officer for NRC & Representation" will be selected as both "Competent Authority Stage-I" as well as "Competent Authority Stage-II".

4.10. The representation shall reach the Custodian who shall then forward it to the **"Competent Authority Stage-I"** electronically for consideration/ disposal of the representation (as has already been discussed, the **Competent Authority Stage-I & Stage-II shall be the concerned "Nodal Officer for NRC & Representation")**

latest by **21st September, 2025.** The **Competent Authority Stage-I** shall forward it in system to the **Reporting Officer** latest by **23rd September,2025** to invite his comments on the APAR representation of the officer. Reporting Officer after giving his comments on the Representation shall forward it in system to the **Reviewing Officer** for his comments latest by **1st October, 2025.** The Reviewing Officer after giving his comments on the Representation, shall forward it in system to the **Competent Authority Stage-II** latest by **11th October, 2025.** The Competent Authority Stage-II (i.e. **Nodal Officer for NRC &Representation)** shall process the representation and put up the same to the " **Representation deciding authority**" for decision/orders. The order given by the "**Representation deciding authority**" shall be uploaded in the SPARROW-CBIC by **"Nodal Officer for NRC & Representation"** latest by **20th October, 2025,** which will then be communicated to the officer concerned by the Custodian latest by **31st October, 2025.** Upon this disclosure of order on his representation, the Officer Reported Upon has to **necessarily accept the APAR at this stage.** After acceptance, the APAR will once again go back to Custodian (CR Section) for Closure; the Custodian shall finally close the APAR and thereafter the APAR would attain finality and then only the APAR would be available in system.

It may be noted that APAR attains finality only after the APAR has been finally closed by the Custodian (CR Section) after acceptance of the APAR by the Officer Reported Upon after disposal of the APAR representation (if any) and due disclosure of the APAR. It is the duty of all concerned- Officer Reported Upon, Reporting Officer, Reviewing Officer, Representation Deciding Authority, Nodal Officer for NRC & Representation and Custodian/ Alternate Custodian — to take all requisite actions w.r.t.APAR Cycle/ APAR process as per the timelines prescribed. Any deviation may be viewed seriously.

5. Help Manuals in the form of step by step guide for different roles as Custodian, Officer Reported Upon, Reporting Officer and Reviewing Officer roles have been uploaded on the homepage of DGHRD website i.e. dghrdcbic.gov.in at HRM1-SPARROW-SPARROW HELP MANUAL for SPARROW-CBIC, which can be referred to.

6. In case of personal staff of Senior Officers viz. Steno/ PS/ Sr. PS etc., the concerned Officer will be the Reporting Officer as well as Reviewing Officer both for the purpose of APAR.

7. It has been observed that many Officers are submitting representations for mistakes/ errors etc. in Section-I of APAR. As per DoPT guidelines, representations can be submitted only for Gradings/ Comments/ Remarks. Representations cannot also be submitted for non- reporting/ non-reviewing of APAR. Representation should not be submitted in case APAR has been force forwarded from both reporting and reviewing authority stages. In such a case, said APAR has to be accepted by the officer reported upon and finally closed by the custodian. A manual NRC for said period has to be created and forwarded to this office so that it can be uploaded to the portal.

8. Level jumping of the Officers in hierarchal setup of working for the purpose of APAR Reporting or Reviewing has been observed w.r.t. Workflow of APAR (for example:Commissioner is made the Reporting Officer for a Superintendent). This is not an acceptablepractice. It directly affects the APAR chain, as then, there will be no further higher officer available for further actions w.r.t. APAR process (so as to complete all APAR steps/actions at the Commissionerate/ Zonal Level), It may be ensured that the APARs upto the grade of Superintendent be reviewed by the Officers upto the grade of Additional Commissioner/ Commissioner only.

9. For Officers working on regular Deputation, whether within or outside the department, the APAR practice followed in the deputation organization will be followed. In such cases, parent office/cadre/ parent zone is **not** to initiate APAR of such officer of the deputation period.

10. For Officers working on loan basis in some other Formation, it is ideal that the Custodian of the Formation where officer is presently working on loan basis initiates the APAR in SPARROW-CBIC.

11. In SPARROW-CBIC, respective Custodians have been given the APAR Retrieval rights of the Officers mapped in their formation. Considering the sensitivity and confidential nature of APAR records, the Custodians are expected to exercise due care and precaution in this regard. Custodiancan access/ retrieve the APARs of Officers/Staff of his respective formation for official purposes. It is also necessary that the Officers/Staff in SPARROW-CBIC are correctly mapped/reflected in their present formation (so that their APARs are available to the concerned Custodian). In case of transfer of officers, Custodians/ Alternate Custodian should immediately inform the same to DGHRD (through email **help.sparrowcbic@gov.in**), for updation in SPARROW- CBIC database.

12. It is expected that one formation (either CCO or a setup headed by Commissioner/ ADG) should have only one Custodian and few Alternate Custodians. The following w.r.t. the Custodian and Alternate Custodians are suggested:

12.1. **CCOs and GST Commissionerates:**

- For CCO: 1 Super Custodian, 1 Custodian and 1 or 2 Alternate Custodians.
- For a Commissionerate: 1 Custodian for whole Commissionerate and 1 or 2 Alternate Custodian for Comm'rte Hqrs.
- For a Sub-Comm'rte: 1 or 2 Alternate Custodian(s)
- For each Division: 1 or 2 Alternate Custodian(s).

(The said Alternate Custodian at Divisional Level shall cater to the Divisional office as well as the Ranges under the Division).

12.1.1. **Audit Commissionerates:**

- For a Commissionerate : 1 Custodian for whole Commisisonerate and 1 or 2 AlternateCustodians for Commisisonerate Hqrs.
- For each Audit Circle : 1 Alternate Custodian

(If the Audit Circles are co-located with the Headquarters Setup, then, the Alternate Custodians of Comm 'rte Hqrs may also cater to Circles).

12.1.2. **Appeals Commissionerates:**

- 1 Custodian and 1 Alternate Custodian.

12.2. **Directorates/ Directorate General Setups:**

- For Headquarter level : 1 Super Custodian, 1 Custodian and 1 or 2 Alternate Custodians.
- For Zonal Units : 1 Custodian and 1 or 2 Alternate Custodians.

(If there are any sub formations like Regional Units or Sub-Regional Units under the ZonalUnit, then 1 Alternate Custodian each for such formation).

12.3. **Customs Formations:**

- If whole Commissionerate is located in one place with centralized Admin/Establishment : 1 Super Custodian, 1 Custodian and 2 Alternate Custodians.
- If there are Field formations like Division/ CFS/ LCS and the same is at least headed by AC/ DC and is available with necessary IT infrastructure, then, 1 or 2 Alternate Custodians at each such formation may be nominated.

The guiding principle is that for each HoD, there may be one Custodian for whole of thatformation (with 2 Alternate Custodians at HQ) and 1 or 2 Alternate Custodians for each sub- formation where HoO/ Establishment Branch is available. CCO/ Directorate

HQ shall also be treated like HoD formation and Custodian/ Alternate Custodians may be nominated as discussed.

13. In each CCO/ Commissionerate/ Directorate HQ/ Directorate Zonal Unit, an Officer of JC/ADC level should be nominated as **"Officer In-charge (SPARROW)".** He/she will be responsible for the overall supervision of the functioning of both SPARROW systems (i.e.,SPARROW-IRS and SPARROW-CBIC in that formation), as well as for ensuring completion of all APAR related actions/ process in time and properly. The "Officer In-charge (SPARROW)" should ensure that all the Concerned Custodians & Alternate Custodians and Individual Officers under them, have ensured the required action at their end as per the timelines. Further, that theconcerned Reporting/Reviewing Officers are writing the APARs as per timelines prescribed.

14. For any issues/ problems relating to SPARROW/APAR filing or for data updation requests, e-mails may be sent at **help.sparrowcbic@gov.in**.

15. Apart from strictly adhering to the timelines, it needs to be emphasized upon all the **Reporting/Reviewing officers that APARs must be written with due care and attention, keeping in mind APAR related instructions**. There have been instances where many columns are not filled properly and gradings are given without proper justification. Further, the details in Section-I needs to be filled properly and completely by the Custodian. The duration/period under the Reporting/Reviewing Officers as well as other details in Section-I needs to be filled completely and correctly.

16. It should be ensured that each and every officer's APAR covering the whole APAR year 2024-2025 is complete.

17. Most importantly, it should be ensured that entire processes of APAR Cycle 2024-2025 - Reporting, Reviewing, Officer disclosure/Acceptance/representation, disposal of representation asper prescribed procedure is complete and final closure of APARs in the system is completed within the stipulated timelines as prescribed by DoPT **(Annexure 'A')**.

18. It is requested that these instructions may be brought to the notice of all Officers/ Staff in your jurisdiction, for necessary action and strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(Alok Jha)
Pr. Additional Director General

ANNEXURE 'A'

Time schedule for writing/completion of online APAR 2024-25 in SPRROW-CBIC (Reporting year- Financial year)

S.No.	Activity	**Date by which to be completed**
1.	Generation/Creation of blank APAR in SPARROW-CBIC by the Custodian and sending it to all concerned (i.e. to officer to be reported upon where self- appraisal has to be given and to Reporting Officers where self appraisal is not to be given)	31st March, 2025 (This may be completed even a weekearlier)
2.	Submission of self-appraisal to reporting officer by Officer to be ReportedUpon (where applicable)	15th April, 2025
3.	Submission of report by ReportingOfficer to Reviewing Officer	30th June, 2025
4.	Report to be completed by Reviewing Officer and to be sent to CRSection (Custodian)	31st July, 2025
5.	Disclosure to the Officer ReportedUpon	1st September, 2025
6.	Receipt of Representation, if any, *On* APAR	15 days from the date of receipt ofcommunication
7.	Forwarding of Representations to the Competent Authority (Nodal Officer for Representation) at Stage-I	21st September, 2025
8.	Forwarding of representation by the Competent Authority (Nodal Officer forRepresentation) to Reporting Officer	23rd September, 2025
9.	Forwarding of representation by the Reporting Officer to Reviewing Officer	1st October, 2025
10.	Forwarding of representation by the Reviewing Officer to Competent Authority (Nodal Officer for Representation) at Stage-II	11th October, 2025

11.	Disposal of Representation by the Representation Deciding Authority and uploading of Order/ decision by the Nodal Officer for Representation in SPARROW-CBIC (at Competent Authority Stage-II)	20th October, 2025
12.	Communication of the decision on the Representation to the Officer Reported Upon by the Custodian (CR Section)	31st October, 2025
13.	End of entire APAR process, after which the APAR will be finally taken on record (Closure of APAR cycle 2024-25 in SPARROW-CBIC)	30th November, 2025