

## **The importance of Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) accreditation**

(By Austin Rutledge, Export Edge's Managing Director)

If you export goods, Customs developments may cause delays and additional costs in shipping your goods overseas.

Customs authorities across the EU are currently encouraging the trade to apply for Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status, which will facilitate easier clearance of goods.

The AEO is the EU's response to the need to secure international supply chains and the introduction of Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) in the USA. Once a Member State has granted AEO status to a trader (economic operator), this will be recognised across all EU countries and will benefit from facilitation in customs controls and simplified customs procedures.

AEOs will have their consignments fast-tracked through customs controls. If a consignment is selected for examination it will receive priority over non-AEO consignments. AEOs will be recognised across the EU and when the requirement to make "Pre-Arrival/Pre-Departure" summary declarations is introduced in July 2009, Security and Safety AEOs will be able to omit certain data elements from the summary declaration.

However, full benefits of AEO will not take effect until the "Modernised Customs Code" is agreed and implemented, possibly in 2010. Many businesses have decided to wait but Customs authorities are pushing for early implementation of AEO, where non-compliant companies will experience increasing goods clearance delays.

If you are seeking to find out more information to apply for AEO accreditation, Export Edge will help you to understand the benefits to your company and the different steps involved in successfully applying for AEO accreditation and will guide you through the approval process.

Export Edge can help you benefit in terms of customs compliance, saving customs duty and help your company reduce import duties, resolve difficulties with Customs, achieve process efficiencies and manage risk. We work with many companies to ensure that decisions are made which take account of beneficial customs and trade opportunities.

In this highly competitive world there are important changes you need to know about if you export or import. Major developments and changes to customs and international trade are in the pipeline over the next twelve months. Export Edge can identify the trade and customs issues affecting your business and provide you with comprehensive advice on new Customs regimes, AEO status, Origin and preference, new HS commodity codes, new Customs Procedure Codes, changes to the SAD and more.

Further details are available on [www.export-edge.com](http://www.export-edge.com).