

Advanced Cargo Information System

Shipping Lines/Agents Questions and Answers

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BUILD STATUS

Version	Reason	Sections
1.0	Initial Version.	
1.1	Added technical questions and answers.	4
1.2	Processes affected by ACI.	2
1.3	YAML Specification: Verifying ACIDs API.	A
1.4	Minor typos, figure captions, added questions to the Technical Q&A.	4
1.5	ACID EDI Identifier changed, Clarify Exporter identification and added link to download YAML Specification.	4

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Processes affected by ACI	2
2.1	Booking shipments to Egypt	2
2.2	Presenting Manifest(s) to Customs via Nafeza	3
3	Business Questions and Answers	5
4	Technical Questions and Answers	8
A	YAML Specification: Verifying ACIDs API	12

1 Introduction

Advance Cargo Information (ACI) is a new customs system under which Egyptian importers are required to declare full information about goods shipped to Egypt at least 48 hours before actual shipping from exporting country.

Misr Technology Services (MTS) has been commissioned by the Government of Egypt to implement the ACI System and integrate it within Nafeza [the National Single Window for Egyptian Trade].

Under the ACI system, a unique number will be issued for each shipment (hereafter named ACID). Upon the acceptance of Egyptian Authorities, a unique ACID will be issued for each ACI request (maximum within 48 hours from request submission). An email is sent to the foreign exporter (shipper) requesting to include the following data elements in all documents related to the exported shipment:

- ❖ ACID Number:
 - a 19-digit number uniquely identifying the ACI shipment.
 - Example: 4988470982020120017
- ❖ Consignee - Egyptian Importer TAX Number:
 - a 9-digit number issued by the Egyptian Tax Authority uniquely identifying all companies registered in Egypt.
 - Example: 498847098
- ❖ Consignor/Shipper - Exporter Identification Number:
 - Nafeza rely on three major elements to identify the exporter as follow:
 - Two letter code (ISO-3166-1) representing the country where the exporter (shipper) is registered,
 - The type of identification number (which represent VAT or Registration number).
 - The exporter identification number issued by the relevant authority.

For more detail about how to include Exporter identification in EDI/XML integration message, please review the answer for [“Where can we include Consignor information \(Shipper\)?”](#) & [“Where can we include the same three data elements if we are using the Egyptian Customs XML Format?”](#) Section No 4 *Technical Questions and Answers*.

The ACI system will be implemented in two phases:

The Pilot Phase started on 1st of April 2021 during which a limited set of importers will be using the system under the close supervision of the Ministry of Finance and Customs Authority.

The full implementation is targeted to start on the 1st of July 2021 where all Egyptian Importers are expected to comply with ACI requirements.

The ACI system will impact the following businesses:

1. Egyptian Importers.
2. Egyptian Brokers.
3. Foreign Exporters.
4. Shipping Lines/Agents.

This document describes the changes that need to be implemented in order for the Shipping Lines/Agents to comply and accommodate the ACI system.

2 Processes affected by ACI

From the perspective of a Shipping Line/Agent, two main processes are affected by ACI requirements:

1. Booking Shipments to Egypt.
2. Presenting Manifest(s) to Egyptian Customs Authority through Nafeza.

ACI procedures requires Shipping Lines to ensure shipments to Egypt are verified using their ACI information before loading. This will be mandatory as of 1st of July 2021, to give time for shipping lines to implement needed changes to their automated systems.

2.1 Booking shipments to Egypt

During booking, the three ACI data elements – mentioned above – should be included as mandatory data elements in all booking transactions whose final destinations is an Egyptian sea port.

Nafeza will provide a public web service that verifies the ACIDs of multiple shipment(s) embarking to Egypt on a vessel. The following activity diagram depicts the needed changes to the booking process.

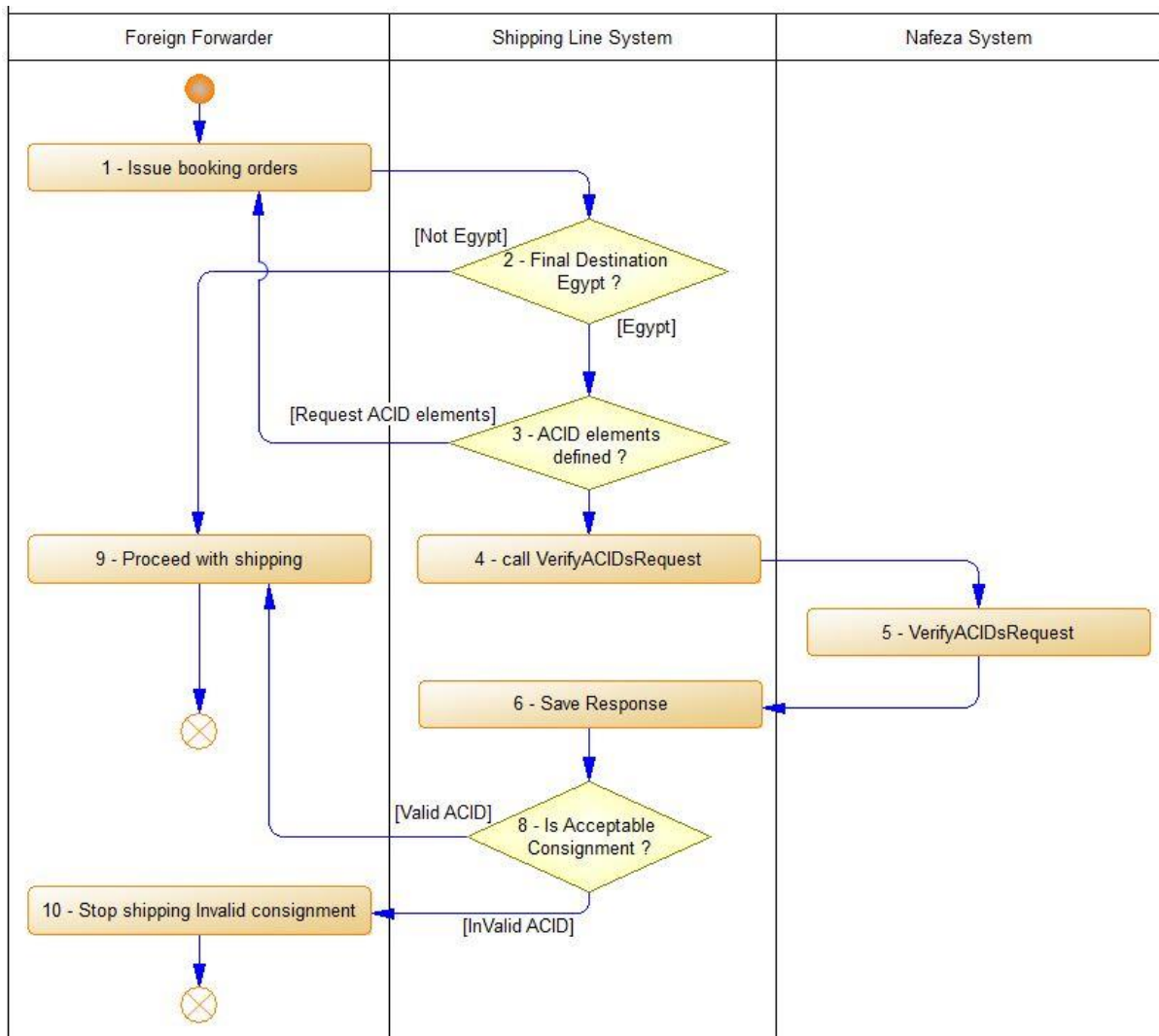


Figure 1: Booking shipments to Egypt

The above diagram suggests verifying ACIDs during the booking process. However, it is up to the Shipping Lines to decide the proper time to verify ACIDs within their processes. The important thing is to ensure never to load a shipment to Egypt which has an invalid ACID.

MTS development team has published the public WEB service [VerifyACIDsRequest] for verifying the correctness of ACID data elements before shipping. Shipping Lines/Agents should modify their systems to rely on this web service. The specification for calling this web service is included in this document in YAML format (YAML Specification: Verifying ACIDs API). Please paste the YAML specification in Appendix A into the swagger editor at <https://editor.swagger.io/>

Additionally, it is important to emphasize the mandatory requirement of saving all response(s) returned by the above service to be used later on in cases of disputes.

2.2 Presenting Manifest(s) to Customs via Nafeza

The second process affected by ACI is presenting Manifests to Egyptian Customs (hereafter named ECA) via Nafeza. As per the current customs law, Shipping Lines/Agents must present their manifests to ECA at least 48 hours prior to actual berthing on an Egyptian Port.

Currently, manifests are being presented to customs through the following three formats/methods:

1. EDIFACT CUSCAR 95 B Format.
2. XML Format (ECA Proprietary Format).
3. Direct Data Entry on Customs Web Site.

ECA and MTS are requesting all Shipping Lines/Agents using methods (1 and 2) to send at least five samples of real manifest files for each sea port they deal with. These diverse samples are going to be tested by both ECA and MTS before going Live. The target date for receiving manifests thru Nafeza is the 21st of April 2021. Shipping Lines/Agents will be required to submit their sea port manifests to ECA via Nafeza using the above three methods.

Meanwhile, shipping lines/agents are encouraged to register their responsible employees on Nafeza and acquire e-Tokens (توقيع إلكتروني) for them. The requirements and steps of the registration process are described on the

The following diagram depicts the process of submitting an electronic manifest through Nafeza.

In addition to the normal consistency validations done today on manifest files, a new set of ACI-related validations will come into effect as of 1st of July. The three ACI data elements will become mandatory for each inbound shipment, and they are going to be verified against the original ACI request submitted by the importer.

Hence, it is important for shipping lines to implement the changes needed to include the three data elements on all Egypt inbound shipments.

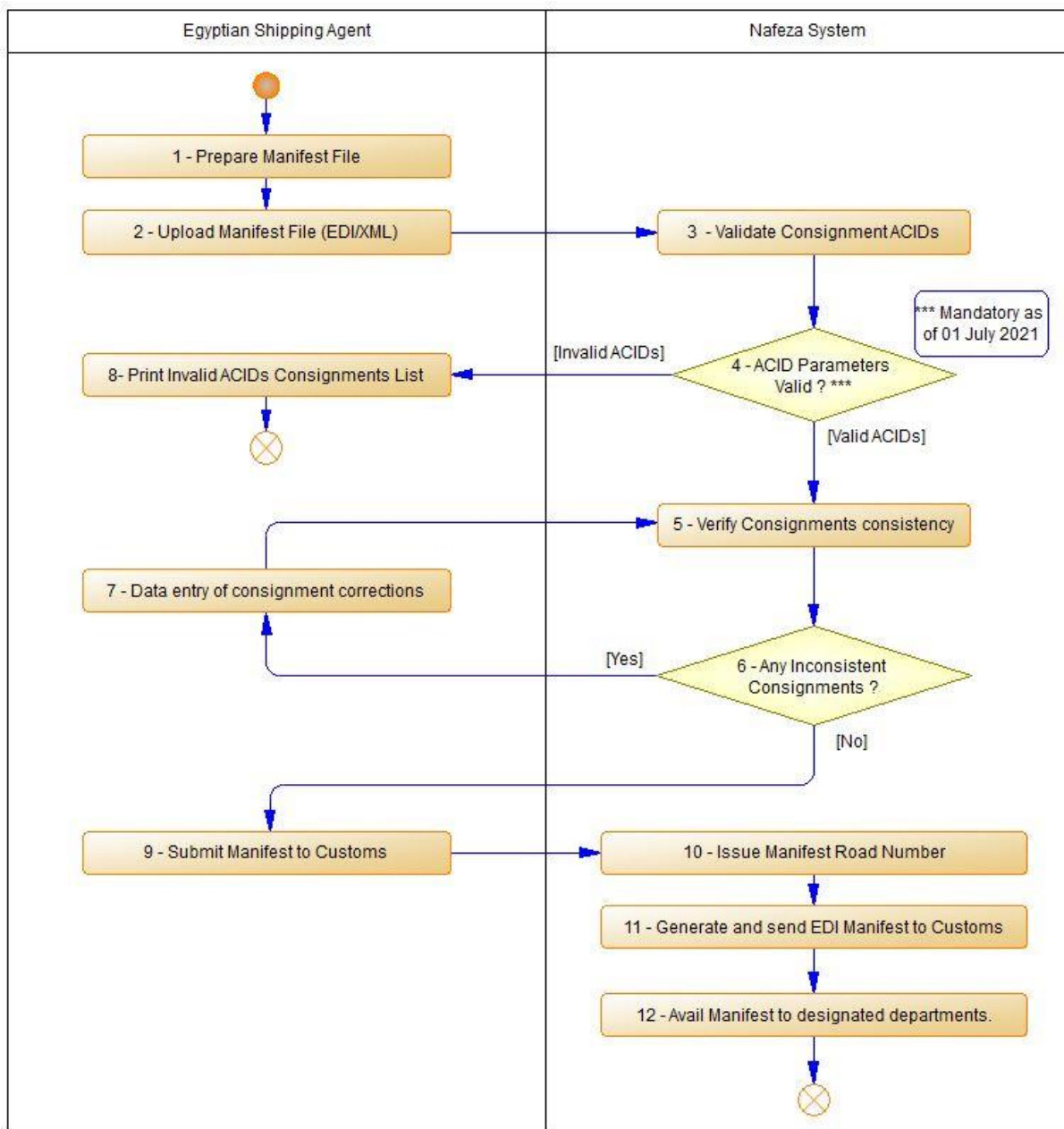


Figure 2 : Presenting manifest(s) to Customs via Nafeza

3 Business Questions and Answers

During the last month MTS has organized multiple awareness online sessions with the Egyptian trade and shipping community in order to introduce the ACI system. Almost all major Shipping Lines/Agents working in Egypt attended these sessions.

This section collates the business questions asked by Shipping Lines/Agents and their answers, while the next section focus on the technical questions:

1. What is the main requirement needed from Shipping Lines/Agents?

- There are three main requirements from Shipping Lines/Agents in order to prepare for full ACI implementation before 1st of July 2021. Mainly, modify their automated system to cater for the following :
 - i. Include the three ACID elements in their booking process as mandatory data elements for shipments bound to Egyptian ports.
 - ii. Verify the validity of these ACID elements before booking or loading shipments bound to Egypt relying on the Nafeza WEB service [VerifyACIDsRequest].
 - iii. Include the three data elements in manifest(s) prepared by their system to be submitted to ECA.

2. Will the above requirement be enforced beginning of April 2021?

- No, the Pilot Phase which starts on April 2021 will include only a limited set of importers. Accordingly - during the Pilot phase - the three data elements are optional in Import Manifests.
- The target date for enforcing the above requirement is the 1st of July 2021.

3. How can the shipping agents/freight forwarders obtain the three data elements before shipment?

- Nafeza will include the three data elements (ACID, Egyptian Importer VAT Number, and Exporter Registration Number) in each ACI request approved by Egyptian Customs.
- Nafeza will also send an email to the exporter including the three data elements along with instructions on their usage. The following diagram is an example of an email sent to the exporter at the beginning of the ACI process. Please note that the exporter receives this email as soon as Egyptian authorities accept the ACI request and a unique ACID is issued for the shipment.

Dear S. H. BAIK,

Kindly be informed that there is Advance Cargo Shipment Request has been created with the following information:

[ACID: 2001809082021030001]

Created at: 3/9/2021 8:05:22 PM

Importer Data	Exporter Data	Shipment Data
Importer Name: المركز للتصدير والتوكيلات التجارية Importer Tax No.: 200180908 Address: القنصلية - س - المنطقة الاقتصادية - المجموع التجاري - القاهرة الجديدة	Exporter Name: S. H. BAIK Exporter No.: UK-02-565465465 Tel. No.: 01055566555	Purchase Order No.: A552514552 Purchase Order Date: 12/2/2020 12:00:00 AM Invoice Date: 1/1/2021 12:00:00 AM Type of invoice: Proforma Invoice Shipping Port: Andong Destination Port: Andong General Description: أجزاء المداة قهوة زجان

Please ensure that the following three data elements are included in all shipment supporting documents (Commercial Invoice, bill of lading, Packing list, Certificate of origin, ...etc):

ACID: 2001809082021030001
Importer Taxation Number: 200180908
Exporter Number: UK-02-565465465

Egyptian Customs Authority (ECA) will not accept any document not matching the above requirement starting as of the first of July 2021.

For more details or inquiries please contact your egyptian importer
 Thanks for using Advance Cargo Information system - Egypt.


 +202 2414 9944
<https://www.nafeza.gov.eg>
 29 Farid Street behind Meridien Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt, 11341

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 *Keep an open mind and think again. Life will continually surprise you. Nothing is permanent and you shouldn't be a slave to your assumptions.

Figure 3: an example email sent to exporters upon Egyptian authorities accepting an ACI request

- ACI procedures require that Egyptian Importers start the ACI process well in advance of bookings. Also they are required to instruct their exporters to include the three data elements in their shipping order/request.
- Shipping Lines are encouraged to issue instructions to their booking agents world-wide not to book any shipment to Egypt without specifically asking for a copy of the above email, and complete the booking process after verifying the three ACI data elements.
- Nafeza will provide a public web service for verifying the validity of the three data elements.

4. Is the ACID a unique number for each shipment? Can it be used on multiple bills of lading?

- Yes, the ACID is a 19 digit number uniquely identifying an ACI shipment imported by a registered Egyptian importer from a particular foreign exporter and is expected to arrive to an Egyptian Sea Port on a specific voyage.
- Yes, multiple bills of lading can use the same three data elements (ACID, Egyptian Importer VAT Number, and Exporter Registration Number).
- The ACID number is issued for one shipper and one consignee for a single purchase order (shipment). If there are multiple shipments pertaining to the same purchase order then the same ACID number can be used. Therefore multiple bookings may be issued with same number and multiple BL issued.
- ACI procedures require Egyptian Importers to instruct their exporters to include the three ACI data elements in their shipment booking(s).

5. What about LCL shipments on the same voyage? Will they have the same ACID?

- Shipments on the same voyage normally will have different ACI information (ACIDs, importer VAT, Exporter registration number) since their consignor(s) and consignee(s) are different. Hence, different LCL shipments will have different ACIDs even if they are shipped within the same container.

6. What about consolidated shipment(s) usually booked by a foreign freight forwarder?

- This case is currently being studied by ECA, and its final steps will be decided upon shortly.

7. When is the ACID issued? Is there a time limit of its usage?

- Egyptian authorities have a 48 hour period during which they can accept or refuse a newly entered ACI request. Requests exceeding this time limit will be accepted automatically by the system. Only accepted requests will be issued an ACID.
- In case of rejection, No ACID will be issued and the importer will be notified by an SMS.
- In case of acceptance, an ACID will be issued maximum 48 hours after submission, and both the importer and the exporter will be notified by an email ([Figure1](#)) containing the ACID as well as Egyptian Importer VAT Number, and Exporter Registration Number.
- Yes, a newly issued ACID has a three months period validity. In other words, if the ACID is not used at all within a period of three month it will be automatically cancelled.
- Importers are encouraged to submit their ACI requests on Nafeza platform in ample time before their voyage departure date. The dead line for submitting ACI Request is 48 hours before loading.
- Exporters are encouraged to utilize the ACID before its expiration date, by issuing their shipping order including the three data elements to their freight forwarders.

8. How can our booking agents verify the validity of an ACID before accepting a shipping order (booking)?

- Nafeza Portal will provide a public page to be used by all booking agents/freight forwarders (humans) in order to inquire about the validity of the three data elements (ACID, Egyptian Importer VAT Number, and Exporter Registration Number). Thus informing them if they can proceed with the shipment.
- Additionally a Nafeza web service will be availed for automated systems to inquire about the validity of the three data elements, so that automated systems can decide whether to proceed with the shipment.
- Shipping Lines/Booking Agents/Freight Forwarders in the exporting country, are encouraged to utilize the above mentioned services to verify the three data elements before booking.

4 Technical Questions and Answers

This section focuses on the Technical questions that were asked by shipping lines or agents:

1. Does the ACID number contain segments? Could you describe its segments?
 - Yes, the ACID is segmented. However, because some special importation cases are still being studied by ECA and MTS (such as consolidated shipments and personal shipments), and since the result of this study might force us to change the segmentation of ACID for those special cases. Hence, it is highly recommended that automated systems of Shipping Lines/Agents treat the ACID as a 19 digit number without segmentation.
2. Please provide the technical specification for the [VerifyACIDsRequest] web service?
 - The specification is provided in Appendix A of this document. Please cut and paste the YAML specification in Appendix A into the swagger editor at <https://editor.swagger.io/>
3. Why does the [VerifyACIDsRequest] contain a collection of ACIDs information instead of one ACID if it is to be consumed during booking of a single shipment?
 - This web service will be consumed by multiple automated systems of shipping lines/freight forwarders...etc. For the sake of providing more flexibility to the caller, it was decided that one call (verification request) should cater for verifying a collection of ACIDs.
 - This will allow different systems to consume the service during different business events (ex: booking, acceptance, payments, loading ...etc.). Hence, it is up to the caller to consume the web service at the correct business event before loading the shipment(s).
 - If the business event handles only one shipment (such as booking) then the caller will always send a request with one ACID Info in the collection. For other business events (such as loading), the caller can send one request for each departing voyage containing multiple ACI Info(s) for shipments bound to Egypt.
4. What is the purpose of “RequestID” and “ResponseID” in the response?
 - The “RequestID” is a string that should be prepared by the caller and should be a unique identifier for the request.
 - Whilst, the “ResponseID” is a unique identifier for the response issued by Nafeza for each response returned.
 - It is highly recommended to save the complete response returned from the web service including the above mentioned IDs along with time stamp information.
 - Nafeza will also do the same of saving the response before it returns it to the caller including the above mentioned IDs and time stamp information.
 - Comparison between the two saved response(s), will provide a decisive solution for settling disputes which will happen if Egyptian authorities find any discrepancies after goods arrival. Hence, it is important to save the response including the unique request and response identifiers as well as time stamp information in both systems (the caller as well as Nafeza).

5. Can you explain the different means through which Shipping Lines/Agents can send manifests to ECA via the Nafeza platform?

- Shipping Lines/Agents can send manifest(s) to ECA via Nafeza through the following means :
 - i. Uploading a manifest compatible with EDIFACT CUSCAR V 95 B format.
 - ii. Uploading a manifest compatible with the XML format supported by Egyptian Customs Authority (ECA).
 - iii. Direct data entry of manifest information.
- Manifest information will be sent to Egyptian Customs Authority (ECA) upon submission.

6. What are the impact of ACI requirements on the manifest information sent via Nafeza?

- During the pilot phase - 1st of April till 30th of June 2021 -, embedding the ACID is optional and should only be done for if the shipper submits an ACID number. If a shipper provides an ACID, then the booking agent should write the ACID within notify party text between two hashes (Example: #2001809082021030001#).
- It is important to note that this is not a mandatory requirement during the pilot phase, it is a temporary option until proper modifications are done to the automated systems.
- Upon finishing the required modifications to the automated systems - before the end of the pilot phase - , the three ACI data elements are going to be included in all of the above means (EDIFACT, XML, and Data Entry).
- It is highly required that Shipping Lines modify their automated systems to accommodate ACI requirements as mentioned above before 1st of July 2021.

7. If we currently do send manifest(s) using EDIFACT CUSCAR V 95 B to Egyptian Customs? What are the changes to our current EDI implementation to meet the ACI requirements?

- Starting 1st of July 2021 the following fields are mandatory :
 - i. Consignor which, by contract with a carrier, consigns or sends goods with the carrier, or has them conveyed by him. Synonym: shipper, sender, exporter.
 - ii. Consignee which goods are consigned to. Synonym: Egyptian importer
 - iii. ACID Number uniquely identifying the ACI Shipment.
- The first two parties (Consignor and Consignee) are expected to be embedded into “Group 7 Collection” as parties related to the consignment where each party should be included in a separate “Segment Group 7”.
- The following description points to the location of “Group 7 Collection” and its “Segment Group 7” element(s) within an EDIFACT CUSCAR file :
 - i. CUSCAR => Group4_Collection => SegmentGroup4 => Group5_Collection => SegmentGroup5 => Group7_Collection => SegmentGroup7 => NAD Segment.
 - ii. Two “Segment Group 7” are expected within “Group 7 Collection”. One for the consignor (shipper), while the other is for the consignee (Egyptian importer). The Name and Address (NAD) segments contain qualifiers to differentiate between consignor and consignee. The ACID number should be included in the RFF Segment of the consignee.

8. Where can we include Consignor information (Shipper) within the NAD Segment in “Segment Group 7”?

- The Consignor NAD segment is identified by the following :
 - i. Party Qualifier (UN/EDED: 3035) value should be “CZ” indicating Consignor NAD.
 - ii. Party Identification (UN/EDED: 3039) value is a party code assigned by the relevant authority to uniquely identify the consignor within a registration country.
 - iii. Code list qualifier (UN/EDED: 1131) value is either “52” or “167” indicating a “VAT” Party Identification or “160” indicating a “Registrar” identification which is the default. Nafeza will assume a “Registrar” party identification if element is undefined or not matching the above three qualifiers.
 - iv. Registration Country Code.(UN/EDED: 3207) two character ISO 3166-1 of the country where the consignor is registered.

9. Where can we include Consignee information (Egyptian Importer) within the NAD Segment in “Segment Group 7”?

- The Consignee NAD segment is identified by the following :
 - i. Party Qualifier (UN/EDED: 3035) value should be “CN” indicating Consignee NAD.
 - ii. Party Identification (UN/EDED: 3039) value is a 9 digit code assigned by the Egyptian TAX Authority to uniquely identify importers (consignees) in Egypt.
 - iii. Code list qualifier (UN/EDED: 1131) should always contain “52” indicating that the Party Identification is the Egyptian VAT Number.
 - iv. Registration Country Code. (UN/EDED: 3207) should always contain “EG” to indicate that the consignee (Egyptian importer) is registered in Egypt.

10. Where can we include the ACID Number in the EDIFACT CUSCAR V 95 B?

- The ACID Number should be included as a Reference Number in the RFF segment belonging to the consignee, i.e. following the NAD segment of the consignee :
 - v. Reference Qualifier (UN/EDED: 1153) value should be “AFM” indicating a Customs Declaration Number.
 - vi. Reference Number (UN/EDED: 1154) value is the 19 digit ACID number issued by Nafeza and sent by email to exporter to include in his shipping order.

11. If our shipping software already allows the user to specify full Consignor and Consignee Information and includes the same into EDIFACT CUSCAR? Would that be enough?

- Most EDI-Compliant shipping software will allow the user to specify Consignee and Consignor Information exactly as required by the EDIFACT standard.
- In that case, Shipping Lines/Booking Agents/Freight Forwarders should ensure strict instructions are adhered to during data entry of consignments. In other words, all consignments shipped to Egypt must have the information above for the consignor and consignee as well as the ACID as described in answers (7, 8, 9, and 10).

12. Where can we include the same three data elements if we are using the Egyptian Customs XML Format?

- Nafeza Portal will publish example files to describe the three data elements within an XML context.
However, should you want to jump start development please use the following three tags:
 - i. <ACID>
 - ii. <ImporterTaxNumber>

iii. <ExporterNumber> value should include country code as well as identification type and number as follow.

- Two letter code (ISO-3166-1) representing the country where the exporter (shipper) is registered,
- Two digits identifying the type of identification number (01 – Company Registry 02 – VAT)
- The exporter identification number issued by the relevant authority.

Example: US-02-1208614364 (A US based exporter VAT Number).

<ExporterNumber>US-02-1208614364</ExporterNumber>

A YAML Specification: Verifying ACIDs API

Nafeza published the latest version for ACID verification specification on its official web site and can be downloaded from the following URL:

<https://www.nafeza.gov.eg/media/files/VerifyACIDRequest.zip>