



**Directorate General of Human Resource Development, HRM-I
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To,

Dated: 21/3/2024

The Pr. Chief / Chief Commissioner of Customs and GST (All)
The Pr. Director General / Director General of Customs and GST (All)
The Pr. Commissioner / Commissioner I/C of Directorates (All)
The Pr. Commissioner / Commissioner, Settlement Commission (All)
The Pr. Commissioner / Commissioner, CESTAT (All)
The Commissioner (Coordination), CBIC, New Delhi,
Deputy Secretary, Ad.II, CBIC, New Delhi.

Sir/Madam,

**Subject: Online writing of APAR in SPARROW-IRS for IRS (C&IT)
Officers for the year 2023-24-reg.**

Please refer to this office letter F.No. 28/1/BVS/HRD(HRM)/APAR/2017 dated 16.02.2017, wherein detailed instructions have been issued for online writing of APAR in SPARROW-IRS i.r.o. IRS (C&IT) officers.

2. SPARROW-IRS has been successfully implemented w.e.f. APAR Cycle 2016-17. To facilitate its smoother implementation for APAR Cycle 2023-24, the following points may kindly be noted for compliance:

**UPDATION OF NAME / ROLE OF CUSTODIAN, ALTERNATE CUSTODIAN
AND PAR MANAGER:**

- (i) Updation of name/role of Custodian, Alternate Custodian and PAR Manager of all the formations in SPARROW-IRS is an essential prerequisite for initiating online writing of APAR.
- (ii) The list of all the formations in SPARROW-IRS (for the purpose of online Performance Appraisal Reporting) and the respective Custodian, Alternate Custodian and PAR Manager as on 20.03.2024 is available on DGHRD website at [HRM 1](#) ► [SPARROW](#) ► [Online writing of APARs](#). It is requested to examine the list and where any change is necessitated, Group 'A' IRS (C&IT) officers may be nominated for the roles of Custodian, Alternate Custodian and PAR Manager, on priority (**Such requests need to be sent through email to help.sparrowirs@gov.in - Manual/physical copy letters may not be sent**). It should be ensured that any such officer nominated for the role of Custodian/Alternate

Custodian/PAR Manager has at least over one year of service left so as to enable completion of full APAR Cycle 2023-24.

(iii) Since the role of Custodian/Alternate Custodian/PAR Manager is critical for successful completion of APAR cycle, hence the Custodian/Alternate Custodian/ PAR Manager should be well conversant with the Computer/IT Systems/Tech-savvy. **The role of PAR Manager can be skipped in small formations (where there is a small no. of Group 'A' IRS(C&IT) officers) as the Custodian/ Alternate Custodian already has all the privileges of PAR Manager's role. The role of primary Custodian is mandatory for every formation. The Primary Custodian's entire work can be done by Alternate Custodian also.**

LOGGING INTO SPARROW-IRS:

There are two ways to login into the SPARROW-IRS portal.

- (a) The first option is to type the url "**sparrow-irs.eoffice.gov.in**" in the address bar available at the top of the browser and press enter. You will have the 'NIC Parichay' screen and need to enter your credentials (NIC/GOV ID in full (including @nic.in/gov.in) and Password). Please do not search words like SPARROW-IRS in search engines of browsers, as results which browsers will give, may have links to SPARROW portals of other departments. **Do not also use** "www.sparrow-irs.eoffice.gov.in".
- (b) The other option is to visit DGHRD-CBIC website "www.dghrdcbic.gov.in". On the right side of the home page of DGHRD website, you will see the "SPARROW-IRS" tab; click on this tab, it will redirect you to 'NIC Parichay' wherein you need to enter your login credentials.
- (c) Username and password for SPARROW-IRS will be the same as that of nic/gov email ID. If you have forgotten your password, please go to "email.gov.in", where there is a FORGOT PASSWORD link; the same can be used to reset the password.
- (d) For any work related to SPARROW-CBIC (APARs of Gr. 'B' & 'C' officers), after login to SPARROW-IRS, click on **'BACK TO UNIFIED SPARROW'** tab available on the top right and on the new page, select **'ALL INDIA/CENTRAL SERVICES'** option and SPARROW-CBIC account can be accessed from there.
- (e) Now, SPARROW-IRS and SPARROW-CBIC portals can be accessed also through e-office portal i.e. **saccess.nic.in** .

3. APAR Timelines for 2023-24 as prescribed by **DoPT vide OM No. 21011/1/2005-Est(A) (Pt.-II) dated 23.07.2009** needs to be strictly adhered to. The timelines are given in 'Annexure'. In addition to reiterating the timelines, the following are instructions for strict compliance for the APAR Cycle 2023-24 in SPARROW-IRS:

(i) 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, 2024** to the PAR Manager and 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 the complete period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The correctness and completeness of this information is essential to decide the creation of APAR/ NRC by the PAR Manager and Custodian. These details are to be filled in with respect to all Group 'A' officers of IRS (C&IT) who are working in a particular formation as on date including for the officers who have gone on Long Leave / Training / Foreign Assignment from that formation.

(ii) Based on the above details submitted by the Administration Section, the PAR Manager shall ensure to create the workflow of all the Group 'A' officers of IRS(C&IT) after logging into the SPARROW-IRS, as soon as possible. It is also clarified that he has to create the workflow in respect of all the Group A officers working under his formation including the officers on Long leave/Training /Foreign Assignment. However, in case of Long leave/Training /Foreign Assignment, invariably the appropriate workflow for NRC/Foreign Assignment Note is to be created.

(iii) 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 the period of Workflow under the heading assessment period selected by PAR Manager 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.

For example: In case an Officer has two-part period PARs (from 1 April to 31 August and 1 September to 31 March) which need to be written for a particular year cycle due to change in reporting Officer in between the year. In this case, when PAR Manager creates workflow for the first part period APAR, period of which is from 1 April to 31 August, he/she should select "From" date as 1 April and "To" date as 31 August from the calendar available under the heading assessment period. For the second part period APAR, "From" date will be 1 September and "To" date 31 March.

For IRS (C&IT) officers, there are 04 APAR forms shown (formats) :

- (a) JTS upto HAG New (AC to PC Level)** - This is for officers from AC to Pr. Commissioner level.
- (b) HAG+ and Apex scale (CC and above)** - This is for officers from CC and above.
- (c) Not to be selected** - "JTS upto HAG New"
- (d) Not to be selected** - "HAG+ and Apex scale"

Note: Forms at **(a)** and **(b)**, are newly created forms in which the integrity column is **with drop-down option** and forms at **(c)** and **(d)**, are old APAR formats in which the Integrity column is **without drop-down option**. As mentioned before the name of the forms at S.No. (c) and (d), these forms are not to be selected in any case. As few APARs are already generated for the A.Y. 2023-24, these form types can't be removed for this APAR cycle, so due care should be taken while selecting the APAR form, as the same can not be changed later.

Explanation: As per DoPT OM No.21011/27/2015-Estt. (A-II) dated 11.02.2016 regarding filling up the Integrity Column of APAR, the remarks shall be made by the Reporting Officer in one of three options as available in **Drop-down option** in Integrity column :

(a) Beyond doubt.

(b) Since the integrity of the officer is doubtful, a secret note is attached.

(c) Not watched the officer's work for sufficient time to form a definite judgement but nothing adverse has been reported to me about the officer.

(iv) The workflows created by the PAR Manager 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 the 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, so that the APAR can be generated and sent to the Officers Reported Upon electronically after e-signing latest by **31st March,2024** (or as early as possible). As has already been mentioned earlier, all the privileges of Custodian's role are also available with Alternate Custodian. Work of PAR Manager can also be done by the Custodian/Alternate Custodian.

(v) It will be the responsibility of the Custodian to ensure that the PAR is generated electronically in respect of all the Group 'A' officers of IRS (C&IT) who are working in his formation as on date including for the officers who have gone on Long Leave/ Training / Foreign Assignment from that formation.

(vi) The PAR generated shall be available in the inbox of the Officer Reported Upon. He/she should complete the Self-Appraisal in Section-II in all respects and forward the same to the Reporting officer after e-signing or using DSC (Digital Signature Certificate) by **15th April, 2024**. In case, the officer does not forward his/her APAR timely, it will be force-forwarded electronically to the Reporting Officer for appraisal without resume/self-appraisal.

(vii) 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 or using DSC by **30th June, 2024** positively. In case, the Reporting Officer does not forward the APAR timely to the Reviewing Officer, it will be force-forwarded electronically to the Reviewing Officer for appraisal.

(viii) The Reviewing Officer shall appraise the officer reported upon in Section III of APAR for numerical grading (against each individual attribute-wise and overall gradings), and complete Section IV in all respects and forward the APAR to the Custodian after e-signing or using DSC by **31st July, 2024** positively. In case, the Reviewing Officer does not appraise the APAR timely, he/she will forfeit the right to review and the APAR shall be force forwarded in system from Reviewing Authority to the Custodian (CR Section) for disclosure to the concerned officer (Officer Reported Upon). Force-forward APARs will only show blank force forward templates. No data/information which was kept/saved as draft shall move to the next stage unless it is properly authenticated (e-sign/DSC) and forwarded/submitted to the next level.

In case of **force forwarded APAR from the reporting authority stage,**

- **Reviewing officer have to go to Section III and select 'Electronic Form' option, then give parameter wise grading in the Reviewing Authority column.**
- **It is mandatory for the reviewing officer to comment on the integrity of the officer.**

(ix) The Custodian shall disclose the completed APAR to the Officer Reported Upon latest by **01th September, 2024** (or as early as possible), electronically. The officer reported upon may view the APAR and may either accept it or choose to represent. If the Officer reported upon 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 online along with any reference document in support of his representation to the Competent Authority (as discussed in the next paragraph), **within 15 days** of communication in 'MY PAR' Tab. It may be noted by all Officers/ Custodians that it is mandatory to complete requisite action on their part in SPARROW w.r.t. disclosure/ acceptance/ representation of APAR and APAR cannot be kept pending without requisite action in time, as prescribed. Any deviation will be viewed seriously.

(x) In the past, it has been seen that many custodians are not taking appropriate action on APARs (different stages) within prescribed timelines. Many officers are not taking action (acceptance/representation) on APAR even after the 15 days prescribed timeline. Such inaction/not taking timely action may be viewed seriously.

(xi) It may be noted that **for the purpose of workflow of Representation (in PAR workflow), DGHRD Nodal Officer (Shri Santosh Kumar Mishra, Additional Director, HRM-I, DGHRD, Emp ID: 3240) shall be selected/ mapped as both the "Competent Authority Stage-I" as well as "Competent Authority Stage-II".**

(xii) **Selecting the Access Privileges:** No ACCESS PRIVILEGE Icon should be selected while creating Workflow of the APAR except in some exceptional circumstances.

(xiii) **Skip Review:** For a PAR, there may be a situation where single reporting officer is there for 90 days or more for reporting but, there is no Reviewing Authority who has supervised the officer for a minimum period of 90 days so as to review the said APAR or where reviewing authority has expired/retired and more than a month has elapsed since date of retirement. In such cases, the PAR Manager/ Custodian has to select/ highlight the **SKIP** icon against the "**Reviewing Authority**" tab under the Access Privileges in the **STANDARD** part of Workflow. As a result, the said APAR after being reported by the Reporting Officer will not go to the queue/ account of the Reviewing Authority & instead it will move directly to the

queue of the Custodian. After clicking on the SKIP icon, a pop-up window will open where the PAR Manager/ Custodian has to mention proper reasons for skipping the Reviewing Authority. The reason must inter-alia, contain: Name and Period under the reviewing officer (s) during the said period. However, even while selecting the skip review option, the name of the reviewing officer has to be given in the Reviewing Authority column/ tab. If there are more than one reviewing authority, then, the name of one with longest tenure may be given; the name(s) of other reviewing authorities and their respective periods may be mentioned in the reason pop-up box.

APAR REPRESENTATIONS:

4. **The APAR representations will be processed online including inviting and receipt of comments thereon from the Reporting/ Reviewing Authority.** Comments of the reporting and reviewing officers on the representation will be taken electronically only in SPARROW and the process would be as follows:
- (a) While creating workflow for APAR in the Representation Section for all Group 'A' IRS (C&IT Officers), the PAR Manager/Custodian should fill the name of Shri Santosh Kumar Mishra, Additional Director, HRM-I, DGHRD, (Emp ID: 3240) in the "Competent Authority- Stage-I" and "Competent Authority- Stage- II" fields. Shri Santosh Kumar Mishra is the Nodal Officer for all APAR representations of Group 'A' IRS (C&IT Officers).
 - (b) The representation shall be submitted by the officer to the Custodian who will then forward it to the **"Competent Authority Stage-I" (DGHRD Nodal Officer Shri Santosh Kumar Mishra, Additional Director, HRM-I, DGHRD, Emp ID: 3240, who would have already been mapped while creating the Workflow)**, electronically latest by **21st September, 2024** for disposal of representation.
 - (c) Online comments will be obtained from Reporting and/or Reviewing Authority by the DGHRD Nodal Officer before forwarding/ submitting the representation to the APAR Referral Board for consideration/ decision.
 - (d) The Reporting Authority shall offer his/her comments on the APAR representation within 07 days and send the same online to the Reviewing Authority for his comments. The Reviewing Authority shall offer his/her comments within 07 days of such receipt from the Reporting officer and send the same online to the **"Competent Authority Stage-II"**. In cases, where reporting/reviewing authority has retired/demitted office/expired, Custodian has to update the workflow by selecting **AUTO DELEGATION TO CUSTODIAN** access privilege icon available against the name of the

reporting/reviewing authority in **REPRESENTATION** part of workflow, so that APAR representation can be moved to the account of the custodian for forwarding to the next stage for further necessary action.

(e) The Referral Board shall dispose of the representation and the Nodal Officer of DGHRD shall upload the referral order in SPARROW-IRS, which will then be communicated/disclosed in the system to the officer concerned by the Custodian (CR Section to Close). 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 (then only, the APAR would become available/ visible in the system).

(f) It is important that representations (if any) are submitted in prescribed time limit by the concerned officer and comments thereon are furnished by the Reporting/ Reviewing Authority (in online mode) within the stipulated time, so that the APAR process can be completed within the timelines prescribed by the DoPT. As per DoPT instructions, APAR representations are to be disposed of within **one month** from the date of receipt of the representation.

(g) It may be further noted that as per DoPT instructions, representations can be submitted only for **Gradings/ Comments/ Remarks.** 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.

(h) Since APAR representations will be fully online in the SPARROW system, no manual letters/ representations/ comments may be submitted.

5. For **Officers working on Deputation**, concerned APAR authority may be consulted (where the Officer is working on deputation) if the online APAR is to be initiated in SPARROW-IRS. If so, the APAR would be generated/initiated in SPARROW-IRS by the Custodian of the formation from where the officer proceeded on to deputation. However, it is necessary in such cases that the concerned reporting/ reviewing/representation authority (of the Deputationist Organization) is available/ mapped in SPARROW (of any service). For IRS(C&IT) officers working in Board/under DoR, Custodian of Ad.II CBIC is responsible for APAR work in SPARROW-IRS. Presently, Shri Saurabh Kumar, Director Ad II is the Custodian nominated by the Board for SPARROW-IRS i.r.o. IRS(C&IT) officers working in Board/DoR.

6. For Officers working on loan basis in some other Formation, the Custodian of the Formation where the officer is presently working on loan basis may initiate the APAR in SPARROW-IRS. However, the APAR can also be generated by the parent formation as well.

7. It is the duty of all concerned- Officer reported Upon, Reporting Officer, Reviewing Officer, and Custodian/ Alternate Custodian/ PAR Manager — to take all requisite actions w.r.t. APAR Cycle as per the timelines prescribed. Any deviation may be viewed seriously.

8. Help Manuals in the form of step by step guide for different roles as Custodian, PAR Manager, Officer Reported Upon, Reporting Officer and Reviewing Officer have been uploaded on the homepage of **DGHRD** website (dghrdcbic.gov.in) (HRM 1 ► SPARROW ► SPARROW help manual) which may be referred to.

9. 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 and that the concerned Reporting/Reviewing Officers are writing the APARs as per timelines prescribed.

NO REPORT CERTIFICATE (NRC)

11. For No Report Certificate (NRC), the following may be noted:

(a) While creating workflow for NRC for the Officers of the **rank of Commissioner and above**, PAR Manager/ Custodian needs to fill the name of **Sh. Ashish Tiwari, Assistant Director, DGHRD** (Employee Code- 8737) in the "**Competent Authority**" field (Sh. Ashish Tiwari, Assistant Director, DGHRD, HRM-I is the Nodal Officer for the NRC purpose).

(b) In respect of NRC workflow of IRS (C&IT) officers **below the rank of Commissioner**, the "**Competent Authority**" may be selected as per DGHRD instructions on NRC issued vide F.No. 8/B/72/HRD(HRM)/2014 dated 03.09.2014 (available in DGHRD website). As per the said instructions, for AC/DC, the NRC Competent Authority is Commissioner/Pr. Commissioner/ ADG/ Pr.ADG (**present jurisdiction**)

and for JC/ADC, it is the Chief Commissioner/ Pr. Chief Commissioner/ Pr. DG/ DG (**present jurisdiction**). For NRC of Commissioner and above, action as at 11(a) above needs to be taken.

(c) Officer In-charge (SPARROW)/Custodians are expected to extend technical assistance to the concerned officers for processing of the NRC requests and regarding online comments on APAR representations.

12. In case of any problem being faced related to SPARROW/ APAR filing or for any role updation/mapping requests, the officers are requested to contact **SPARROW-IRS Help Desk** at help.sparrowirs@gov.in. Now, GOV/NIC email id related work/portal has been delegated to DGPM, so for any issue/query related to GOV/NIC email id, concerned helpdesk may be contacted in DGPM.

13. Please note that completion of APARs as per timelines prescribed is not only mandatory but is a vital prerequisite for proper human resource management for the organization. Apart from strictly adhering to the timelines, APARs should also be written properly as per the instructions. There have been instances where many columns are not filled properly and gradings are given without proper justification. **For example, while an officer has been awarded numerical grading equivalent to "Outstanding" but the Reporting/Reviewing officer has written just one small sentence in the pen picture about the officer. APARs must be written with due care and attention, keeping in mind the APAR related instructions.** 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 need to be filled completely and correctly.

14. All the Controlling Officers (Pr.CC/Pr. DG/ CC/ DG/ Pr. Commissioner/ Commissioners) may please ensure that all the Individual Officers/ Concerned Custodian/ Alternate Custodian & PAR Manager under them, have ensured the required action at their end as per the timelines and all concerned Reporting/Reviewing Officers are writing the APARs as per timelines prescribed.

15. Further, it is important that each and every officer's APAR covering the whole APAR **year 2023-24** is completed and the period should be covered by APAR or NRC wherever applicable. As per DoPT instructions, the explanation of officers not Reporting/Reviewing the APARs of their subordinates in time needs to be called for by the Controlling officers. Therefore, the Officers who have not Reported/Reviewed the APARs of their subordinates for 2022-23, the same needs to be recorded in Section-II of 2023-24 APAR in terms of DoPT instructions.

16. Most importantly, it should be ensured that the entire process of APAR Cycle 2023-24 - Reporting, Reviewing, Officer disclosure/Acceptance /representation, disposal of representation as per prescribed procedure is complete and final closure of APARs in the system is completed latest **by 30th November, 2024.**

17. It is requested that these instructions may be brought to the notice of all officers in your jurisdiction for necessary action and strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

Amand Shah
21/3/2024

(Amand Shah)
Director General
DGHRM

Encl: As above (APAR timelines 2023-24)

Copy to:

(i) OSD to Chairman, CBIC/ Sr. PPS to Chairman, CBIC.

(ii) Sr. PPS to all Members, CBIC.

(iii) Shri Saurabh Kumar, Director, Ad.II, CBIC, North Block, New Delhi- SPARROW-IRS Custodian for Board and DoR.

ANNEXURE

Time schedule for preparation/completion of APAR 2023-24
(IRS-C&IT)

(Reporting year- Financial year)

(As per DoPT OM No. 21011/1/2005-Estt (A) (Pt-II) dated 23rd July, 2009)

S.No.	Activity	Date by which to be completed
1.	Generation/Creation of blank APAR 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)	31 st March, 2024 (This may be completed even a week earlier)
2.	Submission of self-appraisal to reporting officer by officer to be reported upon (where applicable)	15 th April, 2024
3.	Submission of report by Reporting officer to Reviewing officer	30 th June, 2024
4.	Report to be completed by Reviewing Officer and to be sent to CR Section (Custodian)	31 st July, 2024
5.	Disclosure to the officer reported upon	01 st September, 2024

6.	Receipt of representation, if any, on APAR	15 days from the date of receipt of communication
7.	Forwarding of representations to the competent authority	21 st September, 2024
8.	Disposal of representation by the competent authority	Within one month from the date of receipt of representation.
9.	Communication of the decision of the competent authority on the representation	15 th November, 2024
10.	End of entire APAR process, after which the APAR will be finally taken on record (Closure of APAR cycle 2021-22 in SPARROW-IRS)	30 th November, 2024