

Government of India
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
Directorate General of Foreign Trade
Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi -110011

F.No. 01/92/171/06/AM-19/PCVI /40-41, TR.No. 51

Date of Order: 20 .01.2022
Date of Dispatch: 21 .01.2022

Name of the Appellant: **Add Polymers Pvt. Ltd.,
Shed No. 314/315 Marshalling Yard.
KASEZ, Gandhidham-Kutch,
Gujarat 370230**

IEC No.: **3703002042**

Order appealed against: **Order-In-Original No. KASEZ/103/2017-18 dated
22.01.2018 passed by the Development
Commissioner, Kandla Special Economic Zone
(DC, KASEZ)**

Order-in-Appeal passed by: **Amit Yadav, DGFT**

Order-in-Appeal

Add Polymers Pvt. Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "the Appellant") filed an Appeal dated 06.03.2018 (received on 22.03.2018) under section 15 of the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") against the Order-in-Original dated 22.01.2018 (issued from F.No. KASEZ/IA/1592/95/Vol. I/10936) passed by the Development Commissioner (hereinafter referred to as "DC"), Kandla Special Economic Zone (KASEZ) imposing a penalty of Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only).

2.1. Vide Notification No. 101 (RE-2013) /2009-2014 dated the 5th December 2014, the Central Government has authorized the Director General of Foreign Trade aided by one Addl. DGFT in the Directorate General of Foreign Trade to function as Appellate Authority against the orders passed by the Development Commissioner, Special Economic Zones as Adjudicating Authorities. Hence, the present appeal is before me.

2.2. Any person/party deeming himself/itself aggrieved by this order, may file a review petition under the provisions of Section 16 of the FT (D&R) Act, 1992 before the Appellate Committee, Department of Commerce, New Delhi.

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3.0. **Brief facts of the case:**

3.1. Appellant was granted Letter of Approval (LoA) by DC, KASEZ vide letter dated 16.10.1995, as amended/ extended from time to time to set up a unit for manufacturing of :-

- (1) Recycled plastics like agglomerate and granules;
- (2) Garbage bags made from raw materials from (1) above;
- (3) Flexible intermediate bulk container (FIBC), plastic Woven sacks/bags and tarpaulins made from raw materials products from (1) above.

The annual capacity in the LoA was 5000 Mts. subject to conditions imposed therein.

3.2. After implementation of the SEZ Act in 2005, the said LoA continued under the SEZ scheme.

3.3. Rule 18(4)(b) of SEZ Rules, 2006 states that '*No proposal shall be considered for ... (b) enhancement of the approved import quantum of plastic waste and scrap beyond the average annual import quantum of the unit since its commencement of operation to the existing units....*'. Further, as per Rule 53 of the SEZ Rules and terms & conditions of the renewal letter dated 12.12.2013, if a unit fails to abide by any of the terms and conditions of the LoA or Bond-cum-Legal Undertaking, penal action can be taken against it under the provisions of the FT(D&R) Act, 1992 and its LoA can be cancelled as per provisions of the SEZ Act.

3.4. It was noticed by the DC that the Appellant had exceeded the annual import quantum of plastic waste and scrap by 148.454 Mts. in 2014-15 against its annual approved capacity of 5000 Mts. Hence the Appellant had contravened the Rule 18(4) (b) of SEZ Rules, 2006.

3.5. Accordingly, a Show cause notice (SCN) dated 11.04.2016 was issued to the Appellant by the DC as why their authorized operations should not be cancelled under Section 16 of the SEZ Act, 2005 and penalty should not be imposed on it under Section 11 of the FT(D&R) Act, 1992, as amended, (as made applicable under Rule 54(2) of SEZ Rules, 2006) for the above said violation. Previously, a SCN bearing F.No. KASEZ/IA/1592/95/Vol.I/4836 dated 07.03.2011 was issued to the Appellant for exceeding average quantity of permissible annual import quantum for the period 2006-07 to 2010-11 (upto 31.12.2010). However, it was withdrawn as a revised SCN was issued on 11.04.2016.

3.6. Appellant in its Personal Hearing held before DC on 04.09.2017 and in its written submissions stated that Appellant has been NFE positive throughout and have not exceeded their approved import in any year except a minor excess in 2014-15.

3.6. DC after going through the contents of the SCN and all other related documents, proceeded to adjudicate the matter and imposed a penalty of Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only) on the Appellant for making excess import vide Order-in-Original dated

22.01.2018 for violation of provisions of the FT(D&R) Act, 1992 as made applicable vide Rule 54 (2) of the SEZ Rules, 2006 with the following observations :-

- (i) The SCN dated 07.03.2011 was required to be dropped as fresh proceedings have been already initiated vide SCN dated 11.04.2016.
- (ii) As per Rule 18(4)(b) of SEZ Rules, 2006, it is clear that no existing plastic reprocessing unit is allowed to enhance its approved annual import quantum more than average approved annual quantum since its commencement of operation till the SEZ Rules came into force i.e. 10.02.2006. No correspondence, order or decision exists on records to indicate whether any such quantum has been fixed. However, a co-relation can be found out between annual import quantity and annual production capacity.
- (iii) The appellant did not give any specific data to justify that in order to utilize their maximum permissible annual capacity, how much raw materials, in the form of plastic waste & scrap, are required to be imported. Its main product is Plastic Agglomerates wherein the main process of production involves conversion of segregated plastic waste and scrap into plastic agglomerates. The material on record does not indicate any specific loss during manufacturing process. The percentage loss is also not specified in the Standard Input Output Norms (SION) as published by the DGFT. Hence, by taking 2% production loss, the annual quantum of import should be 5100 MT against the annual production capacity of 25000 MT.
- (iv) Taking into consideration the actual imports and 2% production loss, the excess quantity of import comes out to 48.45 Mts. in 2014-15.

4.0. Aggrieved by the Order-in-Original dated 22.01.2018, the Appellant has filed the present Appeal. Despite personal hearings scheduled on 22.10.2020, 11.12.2020, 04.02.2021, 29.04.2021, 17.06.2021, 12.08.2021 and 12.11.2021, the Appellant did not appear but has only filed written submissions stating that in all identical cases, the DGFT has directed for de-novo adjudication. Appellant has raised the following grounds in the Appeal/written submissions :-

- (i) The DC erred in issuing the SCNs dated 07.03.2011 and 11.04.2016 for violating Rule 18 (4)(b) of the SEZ Rules, 2006 as the SEZ Act, 2005 does not have any explicit provisions for imposition of penalty for violation of Rules.
- (ii) SEZ Act, 2005 does not confer power to make rules to empower the DC to impose penalty under FTDR Act, 1992. Therefore, Rule 54 of the SEZ Rules does not flow from any authority of the Act.
- (iii) SEZ Act has an overriding effect over other Acts. The section 52 of the SEZ Act, 2005 makes it clear that Chapter XA of the Customs Act, 1962 and SEZ Rules, 2003 etc. are not applicable after the SEZ Act and Rules come into force w.e.f. 10.02.2006.

- (iv) DC does not have the jurisdiction to issue SCN or impose penalty under Rule 54(2) of the SEZ Rules as this relates to the "Monitoring of Performance" and any action in this regard can be taken by the Unit Approval Committee alone.
- (v) Order-in-Original imposing a penalty of Rs. 10,000/- was passed arbitrarily as the Appellant over a period of 5 years made no excess imports and on the contrary it made 36.58 % less import than the total approved quantum over a period of 9 years.
- (vi) DC has erroneously taken 2% production loss without any authority despite its own findings that no percentage loss is specified in SION.

5.0. Comments on the Appeal were obtained from the office of the DC, KASEZ. The DC vide letter dated 11.04.2019, inter-alia, stated as under:-

- (i) Rules 25 and 54 of the SEZ Rules, 2006 provides that if a Unit has not achieved positive Net Foreign Exchange Earning or failed to abide by any of the terms & conditions of the LoA/Bond-cum-LUT, the unit shall be liable for penal action under the provisions of FT(D&R) Act, 1992.
- (ii) Annual capacity for manufacturing of specified items as indicated in LoA was taken to determine permissible annual import quantum which was implicit in the LoA itself. The period from commencement of operations in March, 2006 was considered for determination of exceeding the annual import quantum.
- (iii) No approved import quantum/SION has been specified in the instant matter. Since SION was not fixed, percentage loss was taken to be 2%.
- (iv) Since the Appellant violated the conditions of Rule 18(4)(b) of the SEZ Rules, 2006 by exceeding the annual approved capacity, the DC imposed penalty on it under the provisions of Rule 54 of the SEZ Rules, 2006 read with provisions of FT(D&R) Act, 1992.

6.0. I have considered the Order-in-Original dated 22.01.2018 passed by the DC, KASEZ, Appeal preferred by the Appellant, written submissions made by the Appellant, comments given by the DC on the appeal and all other aspects relevant to the case. It is noted that:-

- (i) Penalty has been imposed on the Appellant for exceeding the permissible annual import quantum in violation of the conditions of Rule 18(4)(b) of the SEZ Rules, 2006 read with condition No. 22 of the LoA and condition No. 8 of the Bond-cum-LUT. However, it is noted that in the O-in-O dated 22.01.2018, it has been mentioned that any approved import quantum was not specifically mentioned in the LoA instead only its annual production capacity was mentioned. Further, no correspondence, order or decision exists on records to indicate whether any such quantum has been fixed for the unit. Hence, annual import quantum of the unit was not fixed in the LoA or its subsequent renewals.



- (ii) In the O-in-O dated 22.01.2018, it is mentioned that percentage loss is not specified in the SION for the manufacturing process adopted by the Appellant. Hence, it is not clear as to under which Rule, 2% production loss has been arrived at while determining the annual import quantum in the absence of any SION or ad-hoc norms for the processes.
- (iii) It is also not specified as to under which Rule SION notified by DGFT is applicable on units in SEZ under SEZ Act/Rules or orders made thereunder.
- (iv) As per Rule 18(4)(b) of SEZ Rules 2006, as amended, the average annual import quantum should have been determined by taking the import figures since commencement of operation and fixed accordingly. However, the same has not been done by the office of DC, KASEZ.
- (v) It is also not explained as to why "intra zone sales" have not been excluded when the 'intra-zone purchases' have been included.

Hence, it would not be justifiable to penalize the Appellant if the grounds having legal bearing on the case are not considered in the light of applicable policy/procedure provisions.

7.0. In view of the above, in the exercise of the powers vested in me under Section 15 of the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992 (as amended in 2010) read with Notification No. 101 (RE-2013)/2009-2014 dated the 5th December 2014, I pass the following order:-

Order

F.No. 01/92/171/06/AM-19/ PC-VI

Dated: 20.01.2022

Order-in-Original No. KASEZ/103/2017-18 dated 22.01.2018 is set aside. The case is remanded back to the DC, KASEZ with the directions to examine the case de-novo and to pass an appropriate speaking order as per extant law after taking into consideration the Appellant's submissions.



(Amit Yadav)

Director General of Foreign Trade

Copy to:

1. Add Polymers Pvt. Ltd., Shed No. 314/315 Marshalling Yard KASEZ, Gandhidham-Kutch Gujarat 370230
2. Development Commissioner, KASEZ for compliance.
3. Additional Secretary (SEZ Division), DoC, New Delhi for information.
4. DGFT's website.



(Randheep Thakur)

Joint Director General of Foreign Trade