PAN to be key to single window clearances

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Businesses may be allowed to log in to the national single window system

for obtaining various clearances and approvals from both the central and

state government departments by using only the Permanent Account

Number (PAN) as a unique identifier. Currently, over a dozen different

business IDs like EPFO, ESIC, GSTN, TIN, TAN and PAN are being used

for seeking various approvals, depending on the nature of the clearances

being sought.

Briefing reporters on Monday after a review meeting of the national single

window system, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said: "We

are moving towards using one of the existing databases as the entry point,

which is already available with the government…and most probably that

will be the PAN number." "So, with the PAN, a lot of the basic data about

the company, its directors, addresses, and a lot of common data is already

available in the PAN database," he said. The commerce and industry

ministry has already approached the department of revenue of the finance

ministry for this purpose, he added.

The national single window system (NSWS), being developed by the department for the promotion of industry and internal trade, aims to become a "one-stop shop" for investors to apply for various approvals and make it easier for them to set up units. Through the system, the government promises a single online interface to identify, seek and track various clearances from key departments. The idea is to spare investors the trouble of running from one department to the other or having to submit same sets of information across multiple platforms, for obtaining various permits. Moreover, they will get to know what all approvals are required for setting up a facility.

Delay in various clearances and cumbersome application process have long discouraged large multi-national corporations from either investing in India or scaling up operations in the country, something that the government has been seeking to change. Goyal said that use of only the PAN as a unique identifies will help expedite the approval process. The system currently accepts applications for 248 and approvals from 26 central ministries and departments and states.

Soon, the renewal of licences would also be brought under the national single window system, starting with those relating to five ministries, such as commerce, industry, consumer affairs, food & public distribution and textiles. All these ministries are under Goyal.

While businesses are mainly seeking approvals under different policies, including vehicle scrappage policy, ethanol policy, hallmarking of jewellery and Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) approvals, the plan is to move beyond that.

"We will be moving towards newer areas like all inspection approvals, country of origin approvals, export promotion council applications. At the next stage, these will come on the system," Goyal said. Applicants for various production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes are being encouraged to use the single-window system.

The minister said the national single-window system has received about 76,000 applications and requests so far and about 48,000 approvals had been granted.