

No. 28

ROCB A/P
Good Customs Practice Report
on
Canine Training and
Operations in the AP Region
(2nd Edition)



December 2023

Public Version

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Foreword from the Head of ROCB AP

In acknowledging the pivotal role of the Canine function within Customs administration, some members in the Asia Pacific region operate the Canine unit who recognize its indispensable significance in enhancing enforcement operations on the front lines. The global interception of illegal drugs and goods, despite we introduced modernized and advanced technology in Customs enforcement, still underscores the vital contribution of the Canine function.

Yet, it is undeniable that the establishment and maintenance of an effective Canine function pose significant challenges. To elevate the function and quality of Canine, it is imperative to implement sophisticated training programs for both detection dogs and their handlers. Moreover, fostering international Customs cooperation serves as the linchpin for enhancing collective quality through the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

Considering this perspective, the WCO, in collaboration with the Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P) and the Regional Dog Training Center (RDTC) Korea, organized the online WCO Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on K9 in September 2021 and seamlessly coordinated the in-person Regional Workshop on K9 in September 2022 in Korea, generously sponsored for both by the Korea Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Korea). And as a by-product of the workshops, basic information on Canine operation and training was compiled as the “ROCB A/P Good Practice Report”.

We are very pleased with the positive response to this Good Practice Report from many members, who have found it helpful in improving the implementation of K9 and in the process of establishing new K9 training center, and we are very pleased with the contribution this material has made. We also received constructive comments from members at the Regional Heads Customs Administration (RHCA) meeting in May 2023 that the Good Practice Report on Canine is useful information and if it could be updated, members could continue to use it as useful information.

Based on these members' feedback, the second edition of this Good Practice Report, facilitated by the efforts and significant contributions of Mr. Jaemin CHO, Program Manager of ROCB A/P, meticulously details the Canine practices of Member administrations in the Asia Pacific, serving as an invaluable reference for our esteemed members.

The ROCB A/P extends its sincere appreciation to the survey respondents to the survey for their invaluable contributions to the completion of this report. We genuinely hope that

this report not only serves as a catalyst for continuous improvement but also fosters tangible future cooperation within the Asia Pacific region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Norikazu Kuramoto' in Japanese characters (倉本智和).

Norikazu KURAMOTO (Mr.)

Head of the ROCB A/P

Executive Summary

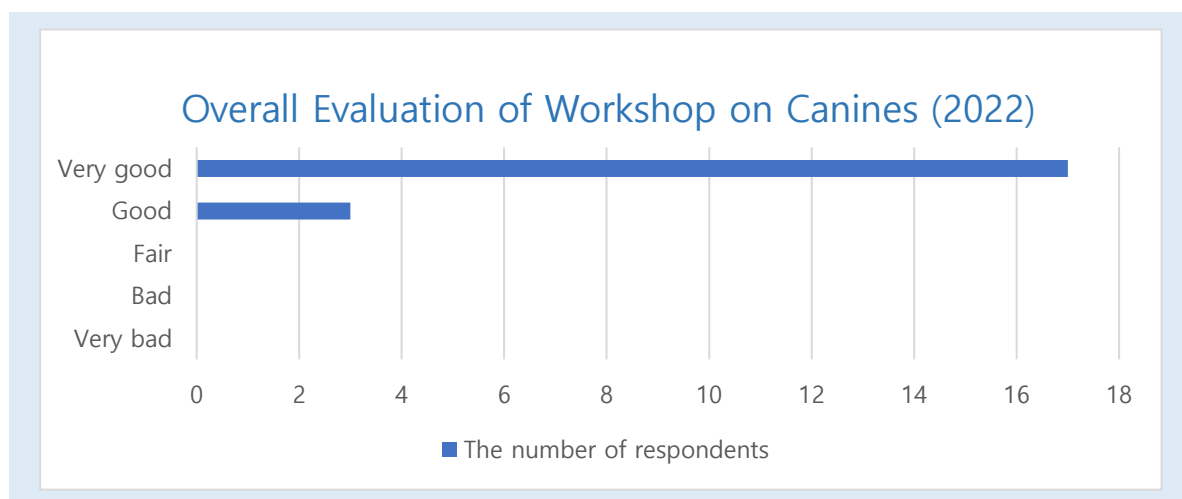
1. Background of this report

1.1 Introduction

In 2021, the WCO Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on Canines marked a pivotal moment in international collaboration, addressing the indispensable role of Canines in Customs operations. Generously funded by the CCF-Korea, the workshop served as a strategic platform for Asia Pacific members to deliberate upon the multifaceted functions of Canines in Customs and their paramount importance in effectively countering drug smuggling and terrorism threats.

Seizing this opportunity, ROCB A/P successfully released the inaugural edition of the 'ROCB A/P Good Customs Practice Report on Canine Training and Operations in the AP Region' in September 2021. The release of this comprehensive report marked a significant milestone, providing a valuable resource for WCO Asia Pacific members. Following the publication of the first iteration of the report in September 2021, a transformative shift occurred in customs practices in post COVID-19 era. During this period, each WCO member diligently enhanced the capabilities of their customs, demonstrating a newfound resilience in the face of challenges posed by the pandemic.

Given the circumstances, the ROCB A/P took the initiative to organize the subsequent Canine workshop, generously funded by CCF-Korea and hosted by WCO Regional Dogs Training Center (RDTC) in Korea, with a specific focus on WCO Asia Pacific members. The workshop concluded successfully, featuring discussions on drug trends, seizure cases, and the sharing of best practices. Following the workshop, ROCB A/P commenced a follow-up action survey targeting participants from the WCO Regional Workshop on Canine. The survey aimed to gather insights and feedback from participants, seeking to assess the impact of the workshop and identify areas for improvement. The results of the survey are outlined below.



Between 2021 and 2023, we observed a notable increase in the number of WCO RDTC members, rising from 2 in 2021 to 5 in 2023. Recognizing the evolving landscape and challenges associated with operating Canine systems, the ROCB A/P acknowledged the crucial efficacy of this system. Consequently, at this juncture, the ROCB A/P made the decision to publish the second edition of the 'ROCB A/P Good Customs Practice Report on Canine Training and Operations in the AP Region.' The objective is to disseminate updated insights into the Customs Canine operational assets of each WCO member in the Asia Pacific region. This report aims to serve as a valuable resource, reflecting the advancements and challenges in the field of Customs Canine operations.

1.2 Scope

This report provides a comprehensive examination of the Customs Canine operational situation in each member within the Asia Pacific region. To compile this report, the ROCB A/P conducted a survey targeting all 34 members in the Asia Pacific region. Out of the 34 members in AP, 27 members kindly responded to the K9 Good Practice Questionnaire distributed by the ROCB A/P. Notably, 11 of the respondents indicated that they do not currently operate Customs Canine teams.¹ 1 of the respondents indicated that they will operate Customs Canine teams in 2024.²

In light of this, the focus of this report centers on the 16 member administrations that currently operate or will operate the Canine teams at a national level. These members include Australia (AU), China (CN), Fiji (FJ), Hong Kong China (HK), India (IN), Indonesia (ID), Japan (JP), Korea (KR), Malaysia (MY), Mongolia (MN), New Zealand (NZ), Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Philippines (PH), Samoa (WS), Thailand (TH), and Vietnam (VN).

The report delves into the status of Customs Canine operations within each member, providing insights into detector dogs and associated facilities. Key areas of focus include the purpose of the dogs, the type of breeds, procurement processes, and the current training status. Additionally, the ROCB A/P will shed light on the challenges faced by each member in operating Customs Canine teams.

¹ Brunei (BN), Butan (BT), Cambodia (KH), Lao PDR (LA), Macao China (MO), Nepal (NP), Singapore (SG), Solomon Islands (SB), Sri Lanka (LK), Timor Leste (TL), Vanuatu (VU)

² Papua New Guinea (PNG),

(Table 1)

Country Code (ISO 3166)	Canine Team operational	Canine Team not in operation	No response
AF			√
AU	√		
BD			√
BN		√	
BT		√	
KH		√	
CH	√		
FJ	√		
HK	√		
IN	√		
ID	√		
IR			√
JP	√		
KR	√		
LA		√	
MO		√	
MY	√		
MV			√
MN	√		
MM			√
NP		√	
NZ	√		
PK			√
PH	√		
PNG		√ ³	
WS	√		
SG		√	
SB		√	
LK		√	
TH	√		
TL		√	
TO			√
VU		√	
VN	√		
Total (numbers)	16	11	7

2. Findings

2.1 Purposes of Detector Dogs

The survey indicates that the primary objective of canine operations is drug detection. Nevertheless, these operations also extend to other areas, including the detection of explosives, currency, firearms, and tobacco.

As of 2023, as per the survey findings, the top six members engaged in the operation of canines on duty have been identified. Japan leads with approximately 130 dogs, followed by Vietnam with 115, China with 107, Indonesia with 78, Australia with 76, and Hong Kong China with 70.

³ PNG Customs Canine Team is still in its establishment phase. Training for the handlers and the acquisition of the dogs are planned to happen in 2024.

Some member countries employ canines for dual purposes. Conversely, other members, including Hong Kong China, India, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Vietnam, operate canines with a singular focus. Comprehensive details regarding the purpose of Canines are provided in Table 1 below.

(Table 2)

Purpose	AU	CH	FJ	HK	IN	ID	JP	KR	MY	MN	NZ	PH	PNG	WS	TH	VN
Drugs	52	-	7	54	26	78	-	38	22	35	√	-		2	2	115
Explosive	9	-		4			-	1		5		-				
Currency	15	-	7	4		2	-				√	-	√	2		
Firearms	21	-	7	4			-				√	-		2		
Tobacco	6	-		4	6		-					-	√			
Others		-					-			6		-				
Total	76	107	7	70	32	78	130 ⁴	39	22	46	20	40	2 ⁵	2	2	115

2.2 Dogs breeds

The survey has unveiled the prevailing dog breeds concerning the operational canines of members. Notably, the Labrador Retriever stands out as the most frequently utilized breed among the identified set of 10 breeds. Detailed information on the breeds of operational canines for each member is presented in Table 3 below.

In terms of the number of breeds for operational canines within each member, China is engaged in training six dog breeds. Mongolia, in its operational canine activities, has at least six different dog breeds. Conversely, Australia, Fiji, PNG, Samoa, and Thailand each employ a single dog breed. Indonesia, Japan, and New Zealand utilize mixed breeds for their operational canines. Comprehensive details regarding each member's canine breeds are provided in Table 3 below.

(Table 3)

Breeds	AU	CH	FJ	HK	IN	ID	JP	KR	MY	MN	NZ	PH	PNG	WS	TH	VN
Labrador	76	14	7	58	20	83	√	31	21	5	19		2 ⁶	2	2	50
S.Spaniel		11		10		1		8	1							
Sheppard		21			4		√			14		√				
C.Spaniel					8					5		√				
Malinois		26				1	√			16						65
G.Retriever				2		1				4						
Hound		33														
Rottweiler		2														
Beagle						1										
Jack Russel						1						√				
Mix breeds						12	√				1 ⁷					
Others										2						

⁴ An approximate number

⁵ By the year 2024, PNG Customs aims to procure its first two Labradors.

⁶ By the year 2024, PNG Customs aims to procure its first two Labradors.

⁷ The breed mixed with Labrador and Hungarian Vizsla

2.3 Veterinarian status

The survey indicates that certain members employ in-house veterinarians as staff or establish external contracts with Animal Hospitals affiliated with Customs. Among the 16 members surveyed, six have opted to employ full-time in-house veterinarians for their canine operations. Australia takes the lead with 5 veterinarians, followed by China with 3, Vietnam with 3, Mongolia with 2, Korea with 1, and Malaysia. A comprehensive breakdown of each member's in-house veterinarians is presented in Table 4 below.

(Table 4)

Veterinarian	In-house veterinarian	
	Full-time staff	Part-time staff
AU	5	
CH	3	
FJ		
HK		
IN		
ID		3
JP		
KR	1	
MY	√	
MN	2	
NZ		
PH		√
PNG		
WS		
TH		√
VN	3	

2.4 Procurement of Dogs

There are three primary methods for obtaining dogs: in-house breeding program, external purchases, and adoption from other member countries or other national government departments.

The survey results show that Australia, China, Hong Kong China, India, Korea, and Mongolia manage their independent breeding programs. Among them, four members opt for a combination of breeding and external purchases. On the other hand, Australia and China exclusively rely on their internal breeding programs. Meanwhile, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Vietnam rely solely on external purchase program.

Fiji and Samoa receive support from New Zealand Police and Customs for their breeding and training programs. In 2023, Thailand received a generous gift of two trained Labradors from the Korea Customs Service. As part of the Australia-PNG Bilateral Agreement, Papua New Guinea is set to receive two trained Labradors from the Australia Border Force in 2024.

In accordance with the survey results, certain member countries extend adoption, funding, and gifting procedures to other members. However, it is notable that none of the members officially offer a dog sales program to others. Detailed information regarding procurement is delineated in Table 3 below.

(Table 5)

Procurement	Breeding	Purchase	Others	Presence of a dog sales program
AU	√			. ⁸
CH	√			No
FJ	√ ⁹			No
HK	√	√	√ ¹⁰	No
IN	√ ¹¹	√		No
ID		√		No
JP		√		No
KR	√	√		No
MY		√		No
MN	√	√	√	No
NZ		√ ¹²		No
PH			√	No
PNG			√ ¹³	No
WS			√ ¹⁴	No
TH			√ ¹⁵	No
VN		√		No

2.5 Training status

The survey has unveiled a notable diversity in the training status among the 16 members. The variability in the number of dogs seems to be correlated with the administration scale. In the context of the period of basic training, it is observed that India conducts the lengthiest training period among the surveyed members, while Mongolia has a relatively shorter training period compared to other member countries. Notably, the most prevalent training period observed across members is a 10 to 12-week training program.

A uniform approach is evident across all members in terms of the training rewards methodology for dogs. Typical methods employed include playing with toys, balls, and towel rolls, providing food incentives, and verbal praise. Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the number of instructors and dogs, along with the training period for basic training and the methods of rewards.

⁸ ROCB AP couldn't obtain the specified information.

⁹ Breeding program through New Zealand Police Dog Unit

¹⁰ Adoption from other government department

¹¹ Breeding program of paramilitary forces

¹² Purchase from Australian Border Force, New Zealand Police, and Private Breeders

¹³ The dogs are anticipated to be gifted under the Australia-PNG Bilateral Agreement in 2024

¹⁴ Funded by New Zealand under the Pacific Detector Dog Program (PDDP)

¹⁵ Donated from Korea Customs Service

(Table 6)

Training	Instructors (numbers)	Dogs/per year (numbers)	Training period (weeks)	Rewards
AU	3	18	11	Play, Food, Praising
CH	6	80	12	Towel roll
FJ	8 ¹⁶	2	12	Tug toys, Bite roll, Food
HK	19	12	10	Playing tug-of-war
IN	2	10	32	Food pellets
ID	17	10~20	8~12	Toys, Praising and petting, Food
JP	-	-	16 ¹⁷	Praising, Playing tug-of-war
KR	15	20	16 ¹⁸	Toys (dummy, ball, etc)
MY	2	22	12	Towel, Ball
MN	34	27	3~7 ¹⁹	Toys, Balls, dried meat snacks
NZ	4	5~8	10	Toys, Food, Play, Praising
PH ²⁰	-	-	-	-
PNG ²¹	-	-	-	-
WS	2	. ²²	12 ²³	Playing with toys
TH ²⁴	-	2	12	Towel roll
VN	115	115	24 ²⁵	Towel roll, Ball

2.6 Subject Areas for Deployment

Based on the survey conducted among 16 members, Canines are strategically deployed across diverse operational domains. These include Customs Controlled Areas, Land border control points, express transit centers, container yards, container freight stations, international post offices, inland freight depots, Container X-ray Facilities, commercial vessels, yachts, cruise terminals, cruise vessels, premises and vehicles for warrant execution, wharves, bonded warehouses, air freight stations, rail stations, Customs Preventive Divisions, Integrated Check Posts, train stations as well as seaports, airports encompassing passengers, luggage, aircraft, entry, and tarmac area.

2.7 Major Duty Zones (Spots)

The survey findings highlight a consistent deployment of canines in crucial areas such as international airports, seaports, and international post offices among nearly all members. A distinctive observation reveals that out of the 16 members operating canine

¹⁶ Four supervisors from Fiji, supported by four assistants from the New Zealand Police and Customs, play integral roles.

¹⁷ 4 months have been equated to 16 weeks for the purpose of this analysis.

¹⁸ Training Puppy: from 3 to 12 months, Training Detector dog: 16 weeks

¹⁹ 21 ~ 45 days have been equated to 3~7 weeks for the purpose of this analysis.

²⁰ ROCB AP couldn't obtain the specified information.

²¹ PNG has not initiated any handler or dog training to date. Scheduled for 2024, specialized training programs will be conducted by the Australia Border Force in Melbourne.

²² Dogs are replaced only when they retire, which usually happens at the age of 8.

²³ 3 months have been equated to 12 weeks for the purpose of this analysis.

²⁴ K-9 Training Center was newly established in 2023.

²⁵ 6 months have been equated to 24 weeks for the purpose of this analysis.

teams, 7 members possess a land border, and consequently, all 7 members deploy canines in this specific border domain. Additionally, some members extend the deployment of canines to the bonded areas including customs premises and warehouse. Refer to Table 5 for a detailed breakdown of the major duty zones for canines across the 16 members.

(Table 7)

Major zones	AU	CH	FJ	HK	IN	ID	JP	KR	MY	MN	NZ	PH	PNG ²⁶	WS	TH ²⁷	VN
International airport (cargo)	√		√	√		√	-	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
International seaport (cargo)	√		√	√		√	-	√	√		√	√		√		√
International airport (passenger)	√	√	√	√	√	√	-	√	√	√	√			√		√
International seaport (passenger)	√		√	√		√	-	√	√		√			√		√
International mail	√	√	√	√	√	√	-	√	√	√	√	√		√		
Land border		√		√	√	√	-		√	√						√
Container Yard		√	√	√			-		√			√		√		
Container freight station			√				-					√		√		
Bonded area of Customs			√		√		-	√	√			√		√		
Police warrant job			√				-									
Sports event			√				-									
Inland container depot					√		-					√				
Express transit center		√					-									

3. Challenges

In the inaugural edition of the 'ROCB AP Good Customs Practice Report on Canine Training and Operations in the AP Region', several challenges were identified apart from the good practices. These challenges encompass the imperative to enhance programs dedicated to both Canines and handlers, a need for improved awareness of emerging threats, non-availability of ready-to-use artificial scent kits, difficulty in accessing maritime seacraft for training, a shortage of professional trainers, difficulties in sourcing high-quality dogs, and so forth.

Following the identified challenges in 2021, the ROCB A/P conducted a re-survey to

²⁶ PNG is currently in the initial phases of establishment such as handler recruitment, kennel construction, and asset acquisition.

²⁷ Thailand is establishing K-9 Training Center in 2023. During its inaugural year, its primary focus is on training Canines to operate effectively in work environments.

assess the current landscape in 2023. The results reveal that, in comparison with other challenges, the primary concerns are Programs for enhancing the handler, Knowledge of emerging threats, and Budget for facility and management.

In the realm of knowledge concerning emerging threats, several members have underscored the engagement in research & development and the importance of establishing a network of canine administrations among the members, which would play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge about emerging threats related to drug smuggling. While canine units are effective in dealing with traditional drugs like synthetic cannabinoids, Members face a shortage of training resources within the canine operational field, particularly concerning emerging drugs such as Fentanyl.

Regarding the Program for enhancing the handler, member administrations typically administer foundational training for handlers, incorporating an appraisal process to monitor and elevate their performance. Certain members have proposed the implementation of an exchange program for canine handlers to augment performance, as well as the incorporation of online lectures delivered by expert trainers to enhance knowledge and skills.

In the context of budget considerations for facility and program management, certain members have highlighted the necessity of allocating distinct budgets for the Dogs Training Center and the Canines Field team to facilitate optimal functionality and operational effectiveness for both entities.

In addition to the three challenges aforementioned earlier, Table 6 outlines the confirmed challenges. Notably, the recruitment of staff specialized in the breeding, development, and training of dogs could emerge as a distinct challenge within the Customs Canines field.

(Table 8)

Challenge	AU	CH	FJ	HK	IN	ID	JP	KR	MY	MN	NZ	PH	PNG	WS	TH	VN
Program Enhancing K9				√	√					√	√	-	√	√	√	√
Program enhancing Handler		√		√	√					√	√	-	√	√	√	√
Knowledge on emerging threat			√		√	√		√	√	√	√	-	√	√	√	√
Real sample for drug training			√		√					√		-	√	√	√	√
Artificial scent kit			√		√					√		-	√			
Vessels for training					√	√					√	-	√	√	√	√
Number of instructors				√	√					√		-	√	√	√	√
Number of Available K9		√	√							√	√	-	√	√	√	
Procurement method of good dogs				√				√	√	√		-	√	√	√	√
Veterinarian service										√		-	√	√	√	
Sufficient Facility		√	√							√	√	-	√	√	√	
Budget for facility and managing		√	√		√			√		√	√	-	√	√	√	
Care for inactive dogs			√							√		-	√	√	√	
Recruitment of staff to breed dogs	√											-				

4. Conclusions

Due to the unique position of the K9 unit as a part of the enforcement function at the front lines, there are no rules or guidelines like conventions or international standards in the WCO, but we believe that a lot of information on the maintenance and operational know-how on operation and training can be gained from international cooperation.

Considering this backdrop, the ROCB A/P conducted a comprehensive survey to examine the status and challenges of Customs Canine operations within each member's jurisdiction. While some members have implemented Customs Canine programs at an earlier stage, others are currently in the initial phases of establishing their capabilities in the field of Customs Canine operations.

Therefore, members in the initial stages require sufficient training and mentorship to effectively handle and manage these challenges. To address this need, the implementation of an optimized training program and the establishment of a structured information-sharing mechanism for canine operations are essential to effectively

navigate and overcome these challenges.

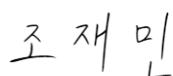
As a strategy to address the challenges outlined in this report, it is recommended to augment personnel training opportunities and establish a dedicated learning platform for canine operations. Additionally, the establishment of a network for the collaborative sharing of information and training methodologies among members is proposed. In this sense, periodic organization of international joint comprehensive meetings is suggested to foster collective efforts and facilitate knowledge exchange. Furthermore, it is advised to cultivate capacity-building activities focused on holistic canine operations, encompassing proficiency in profiling and targeting trends related to drug detection.

In the Asia Pacific region, there are currently 5 WCO RDTCS as of today located in Australia, China, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, and Korea, and they are expected to play a pivotal role in the Asia Pacific region, facilitating the sharing of their Canine training programs and facilities with Customs administrations. In addition to this, many of Asia Pacific members have operated Canine and also contributed to regional cooperation. We are really proud of the quite ideal regional cooperation in the K9 area that we have.

Thank you again, all Asia Pacific members, for your strong support and contribution in materializing this Good Practice Report from the bottom of my heart. Needless to say, the ROCB A/P has fully committed to actively supporting the Asia Pacific region by utilizing all means and opportunities.

For comments and inquiries regarding this publication, kindly contact Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P at jaemincho@rocbap.org or rocb@rocbap.org.

December 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the Korean characters '조재민' (Jo Jae-min) written in a stylized, cursive manner.

Jaemin Cho (Mr.)

Program Manager, WCO ROCB AP