



ROCB
Asia/Pacific

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World Customs Organization



Ms. Sherman YU



Mr. Norikazu KURAMOTO



Ms. Yuko MAMIYA



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-  Korea Customs, racing for expanding partnership with foreign customs authorities
-  International Conference in Digital transformation in Customs by Indonesia Customs
-  An overview of Philippines Customs' journey toward transformation

FOREWORD



Dear Readers,

Thank you for taking the time to read this 73rd ROCB A/P E-Newsletter.

The WCO council sessions on 2020/21 were held virtually in late June at the end of the WCO 2020/21 fiscal year, the most challenging year in the WCO history. Looking back on the WCO last fiscal year, it was a year in which the strength of WCO and its Members was shown. The effort in maximizing Customs functions by Members in the face of many restrictions was very professional. I believe the effort and responsibility taken for COVID-19 countermeasures, a central concern around the world, was outstanding. In particular the support of vaccine delivery was a highlight.

ROCB A/P also has continued to deliver capacity building workshops in 2020/21 fiscal year. Due to the situation of COVID-19, these workshops were delivered online nevertheless successfully with the great understanding of the Asia Pacific Members. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my highest appreciation for all Asia Pacific Members and its participants for supporting ROCB A/P's works as well as for joining our workshops.

This E-Newsletter features our activities undertaken by Asia Pacific members in the second quarter of 2021, i.e. April through June 2021. In this E-Newsletter, we present special articles from Asia Pacific members, namely (1) Korea Customs, racing for expanding partnership with foreign customs authorities by Korean Customs (2) International Conference in Digital transformation in Customs by Indonesia Customs and (3) An overview of Philippines Customs' journey towards transformation by Philippines Customs. I really appreciate being able to share these articles.

In addition, ROCB A/P is now more focused on publication and information sharing which is one of the main functions of ROCB A/P. In this ROCB A/P E-Newsletter, we present several special essays that explain WCO tools and hot topics in a user-friendly and easy-to-understand manner. There are three special essays by the Program Managers of ROCB A/P in this No 73 E-Newsletter, (1) The WCO tools of the cross-border E-Commerce by Ms. Yuko Mamiya (2) The role of ROCB A/P in the COVID-19 pandemic by Ms. Grace YE (3) Highlights of the 5th WCO Global AEO Conference by Ms. Sherman YU and (4) An introduction of the ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Exemplifying Follow-up Actions in FY 2019/2020 by Ms. Pavida Boonmun. We sincerely hope that ROCB A/P publications will be good reference material for policy officials as well as field officers.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to briefly touch on the personal information of ROCB A/P. I am also pleased to be able to welcome Ms. Grace YE, Program Manager on official secondment from China Customs. I would like to extend my warm welcome to Ms. Grace YE in joining the ROCB A/P. On behalf of our office, I would like to express my highest appreciation to China Customs for continuously seconding experienced officials to ROCB A/P.

The ROCB A/P is always keen to hear any of your constructive comments and suggestions/input to our activities, including our communication and public relations activities, with a view to better servicing regional member Customs administrations. I would like to continue to convey not only ROCB A/P's activities but also members' interesting activities through our E-Newsletters.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norikazu Kuramoto' in Japanese characters.

Norikazu Kuramoto (Mr.)
Head of the ROCB A/P

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Korea Customs, racing for expanding partnership with foreign customs authorities



Si kyung JOO

Director General

International Affairs Bureau, Korea Customs Service

The global trade landscape is currently going through transformation such as disruption in the supply chain due to the COVID-19, transition to digital trade, trade issues relating to environment, expanding signing of FTAs and rise of new protectionism.

Korea Customs is making constant efforts home and abroad to proactively respond to this sudden change in the international trade environment. Korea Customs recently launched 'Big Data Promotion Group' and 'E-commerce Division'. Also it is constantly working towards public-private partnership in using new technologies, active administration in customs service and non face-to-face customs service assistance for Korean companies.

Moreover, we are expanding the scope of joint projects with foreign customs authorities including establishment of Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) with foreign customs agencies and expansion of AEO MRA.

In 2020, Korea proposed emergency response guideline to verify origin online (including e-mail) and extend the deadline of its reply to prevent any errors in origin verification due to the COVID-19. 50 partner countries including EU agreed the necessity and implementation of our proposal and its guideline is assisting companies with preferential tariffs.

In May 2021, Central Asian countries requested Korea Customs to offer training sessions on customs analysis techniques with respect to capacity building activities for foreign customs officers and we also received technical assistance requests in e-commerce, data analysis and

training techniques from ASEAN at ROK-ASEAN Director General meeting in June.

With the increasing needs in learning customs-related techniques and experiences from foreign customs agencies, Korea Customs has been implementing capacity building projects over 190 times in information, clearance, investigation, audit and analysis with ODA and CCF-K targeting customs officers in the Asia Pacific region. Further, CCF-K amount increased from 1.8 million US dollars to 2.7 million US dollars last year, supporting the WCO projects.

This year, Korea Customs is developing a program to conduct training on import inspection through VR technologies in partnership with the WCO through the CCF-K and going to launch the program for the WCO Members in the near future. Given that growing number of customs authorities start to have interests in the use of Big Data and data analytics, we are scheduled to host commissioned training on data analytics for 10 countries in the Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia this October.

Once Korea Customs and foreign customs create synergy through capacity building activities, it will contribute to saving logistics costs for businesses, reducing clearance time and increasing efficiency of customs service, consequently leading to cross-border trade facilitation.

In the coming years, Korea Customs will not be complacent on what we have achieved so far. We are going to pursue change and innovation to make a sound development in customs administration. Korea Customs will spare no efforts in supporting Members who wish to learn experiences from Korea Customs.

COVID-19 variants cause growing concern, and the world health emergency still lingers on. We wish to have fruitful discussion on development of customs administration with Customs Administrations of the Asia Pacific Members when the public health emergency passes by. Thank you.

International Conference on Digital Transformation in Customs

On 16-18 March 2021, RTC Indonesia organized **International Conference on Digital Transformation in Customs**. The three-day conference discussed the remarkable contribution of digital transformation in many customs areas, which invited the qualified and experienced speakers, from government official, practitioners, WCO Accredited Expert, and ASEAN Regional Expert.

The event was initiated with the call for papers that focused on three digital transformation topics in customs, which are Innovation in Trade Facilitation and Customs Service, Innovation in Trade Security and Customs Control, and Innovation in Post Clearance Audit (PCA). After a careful refereeing process, nine papers were selected for presentation at the conference.

This conference was the first virtual event that marks the Indonesian Customs and Excise Education and Training Center's establishment as the WCO Regional Training Centre for the Asia Pacific. The conference was attended by customs officers from Australia, Belgium, Hongkong-China, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Netherland, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Furthermore, more than three thousand participants joined the conference via Zoom Cloud Meeting and YouTube Channel of Pusdiklat Bea dan Cukai.

Day 1: Innovation in Trade Facilitation and Customs Service



On the First Day, the conference was opened by The Chairman of the Financial Education and Training Agency, Mr Andin Hadiyanto. The Minister of Finance of Republic Indonesia, Mrs. Sri Mulyani Indrawati, was invited to present her keynote speech. In her speech, Sri Mulyani acknowledged the importance of customs role in regulating strategic policy for the economic sector, especially concerning and anticipating the digital economy's changing. Indonesia, use the digital platform to accelerate reform including establishing the National Single Window, while in the context of region also integrated with the ASEAN Single Window, and also

currently reforming the National Logistic Ecosystem which is going to create a white platform for

all stakeholders to interact with this digital platform. In the aspects of customs services, supervision, and law enforcement, digitalization or automation could give significant and positive impact such as increasing compliance in international trade, improving coordination among customs officers or between customs officers and related institutions that are responsible for regulating or monitoring import and export, increasing transparency in regulations and decision-making processes and increasing the ability to detect fraud or illicit trade.

Moreover, she also supports human capital investment through training. She said, "Digital transformation expected to increase transparency and certainty in the decision-making process that also at the same time detecting the potential abuse or fraud or criminal activity. So, these are the benefit that can be enjoyed, but at the same time, it requires a lot of change in the way customs work. So for now, we need to continue investing in the education and training for many world custom officers for them to be able to understand the change in the digital technology and adjusting the way they perform and responsibility in work."

The invited speakers on day one of the conference discussed the topic, "Single Window: Simplification, Harmonization, and Digitalization of Customs Services."

The first expert, Mr Donald TAN Chor Suan, WCO Accredited Expert on Single Window, explained the concept of Single Window and Singapore's Digitalization Journey. Followed by a presentation from Mrs. Sri Dewi, Deputy Director of Service Quality and Data Information Management, Indonesian NSW Agency, who described the journey of forming a single window in Indonesia and the ways forward.

The conference continued with the presentation from the participant that had submitted their papers. The first paper presented by the participant from Belarus, Volha Kavalcuk, titled "Customs Politics as the Guaranty of Further Trade Facilitation and Customs Service Improvement ". The research is objected on the EU and the EAEU integration in the political aspect, customs policy as a tool of integration development, and its role in trade facilitation.

The next presentation provided a review of the potential for excise revenue, income tax, and value-added tax (VAT) from carbon emissions and an effort to build integrated supervision among stakeholders, with the title "A Digital Integrated Carbon Pricing System for Indonesian



Government". The study is written by Agustinus Imam Saputra, Henry Kuswanto and Jarot Limpato from Indonesia.

The other paper, "A New Dynamic System Model to Control the Price of Goods During the

Epidemic of COVID-19 Using Customs Tariffs", written by A.Badi, F. Rahbar, A. Baedi, H. Arasteh Rad, M. Talebi from Iran, showed that there is a close relationship between trade, economy and production and focused on the effect of the epidemic on macroeconomics, especially foreign trade. A new dynamic system model of the supply chain in foreign trade is mathematically modelled to achieve this goal.

In the last session, I Gede Yudi Paramartha, Bakhtiar Amaludin, and Ade Satya Wahana from Indonesia presented their paper "HS Code Prediction Tools Using Machine

Learning. It discussed how to develop prediction tools using machine learning models to classify HS Code based on a study conducted by F. Altaheri and K. Shaalan. The researchers deployed that result in prediction tools and named it HS Code Finder.

Day 2: Innovation in Trade Security and Customs Control

The second day of the International Conference on Digital Transformation in Customs



focused on Innovation in Trade Security and Customs Control. The conference started with the keynote speech from Mr. BAEK Hyungmin, Head of WCO RILO A/P. In the keynote speech, he asserted the importance of digital approaching to draw innovation and creativity, especially in area of trade security

and customs control. A systematic digital approach needs to be developed to detect and analyze high risk and threat from imported goods and passengers. Furthermore, he introduced some of the technology of data analytics with different data sources. Those are structure data analytics, image recognition algorithm, and data analytics algorithm.

As day one, there were two sessions in day two of the conference, where in the first session, the participant listened to the presentation from the invited speakers. The discussion was on the topic of “The Security of Data Interchange”. We proudly invited two experts, Mr. Agus Sudarmadi, Director of Customs and Excise Information and Technology – DGCE, to explain the Indonesian Customs data security platform. He started describing the development of ICT in Indonesian Customs, how the process, the impact of platform collaboration in import and export procedures, the importance of infrastructure and regulation in data security, and highlighted that security is everyone's responsibility.



To bring a deeper understanding on the security of data interchange, Mr. Royke Lumban Tobing, GWAPT, GCIH, CITP, Threat Intelligence Director of PT. Spentera shared his analysis regarding a threat intelligence on the cyberattack and data breach in the customs institution, which actively having electronic data interchange.

In the second session, the participants who have submitted their papers in the call for papers shared their research with the other participants. The first paper by Hassan Ali Khojasteh Aliabadi, Ghorban Karimi, "Development of Risk Assessment Management Model of Import Declarations in Iranian Customs Based on Data Mining Techniques", identified a comprehensive and intelligent model for risk assessment and classification of import declarations. Finally, the random forest model as a comprehensive model for predicting and determining the risk category of import declarations were selected.

The next presented paper was "Construction and Procurement of Monitoring Control Room using SIPANDAI", by Agustinus Catur Setiawan, Benny Marcos Samosir, Denny Kusuma Wardana, Arif Supriyadi, M. Fahry Firmansyah, Demis Idjaf, Brian Ardayanto and Ananda Meiryzqie from Indonesia. It explained the differences before and after using SIPANDAI application as a monitoring tool and described some of the problems before the innovation.

Day 3: Innovation in Post Clearance Audit (PCA)

The last day of the conference opened with the keynote speech from Nugroho Wahyu W, Director of Customs and Excise Audit of DGCE. He conveyed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to strengthen the implementation of PCA. PCA proves to be an essential tool for ensuring that customs control is effective in many aspects and plays a role in implementing an effective customs risk management strategy.



In connection with Indonesian customs effort in implementing PCA's digital transformation even before COVID-19, Indonesian customs has already been experimenting with new technology and working with big data that perform higher quality and more efficient and focused audit. Indonesian Customs significantly started PCA's Innovation by leveraging the information and collaboration technology in almost every audit procedure and developing and implementing the dashboard analysis by leveraging business intelligence software. It is used to analyze and assess compliance and the tendency of potential fraud committed by the trader. Furthermore, Indonesian customs also establish some other practical applications by developing the system information management in form and application, namely, the audit management system (SIMAUDI). It supports audit implementation by monitoring the audit performance in customs and excise regional office and prime customs and excise office. At the end of his speech, he persuaded us that it is time for us to move from conventional procedure to digital procedure to achieve a higher quality audit, more efficient audit, and better trader compliance.



At the first session of the conference, the Invited speaker gave a short talk followed by a discussion facilitated by the moderator and discussed more in-depth about PCA. The first expert Mr. HAN Ilkwon, CCF/Korea Operation Manager and Program Manager (ECWA) at WCO ROCB A/P and Expert on PCA, outlined the PCA's concepts, the objective of PCA and how to innovate PCA in the digital era by adopting AI technology and virtual audit. It followed by a brief explanation from Mr Heru Hardjanto Adi Pradopo, ASEAN Regional Expert on PCA, that illustrated the challenges in the PCA and the process of E-Audit.

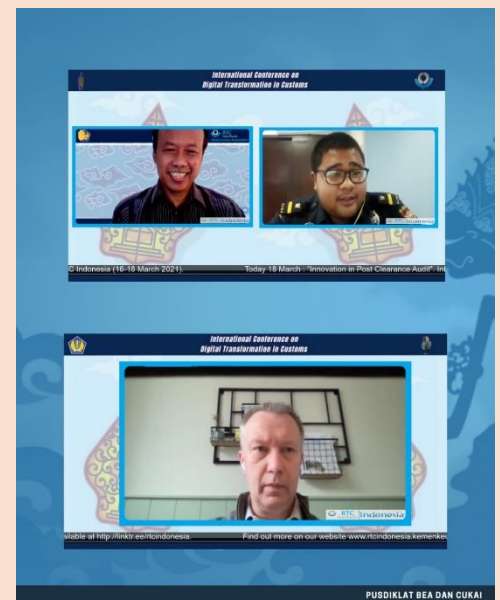
In the last session, the participants whose paper are accepted in the call for paper have an opportunity to present their research. The first author is Yuliya Pantsiuk from Belarus. Her research is "Post Clearance Audit as a Business Analytics Tool for Sustainable Development of Enterprises: The EAEU Experience". It concluded that PCA's introduction as a business intelligence tool would contribute to the sustainable development of enterprises engaged in foreign economic activity by reducing negative economic consequences.

Other participants from Indonesia, Rana Pratama, Agus Ridwan Fauzi, Heikal Styron Octavian researched "Audit Targeting in Determination of Audit Object Planned". The research describes DROA's targeting analysis model, which only utilizes simple analysis techniques that emphasize intuition towards a more objective and measurable model. Newly proven analytical techniques generate larger audit bills, and recent methods have started using tools such as Tableau and Power BI but are far from being fully digitized.

The last presented paper, "Demonstrating Compliance, How Can Standardized Data and Standardized Analysis Contribute to Deliver Compliance by Companies?" is by Henk van Maenen from the Netherland. It concluded that companies' compliance can be demonstrated by using a standard audit file and standard analyses and that the standardized analyses can be carried out by companies themselves on the audit file. The interviews with experts from Customs, companies and software suppliers show that performing the standardized analyses on standard data has added value for all parties contributing to improved regulatory evidence and less administrative burden. It fits a data-driven regulatory supervision policy in which companies demonstrate compliance themselves. Regulators can assess compliance at a distance, provided that the data are reliable.



Furthermore, RTC Indonesia optimistically contributing more to better collaboration in customs.



In the closing remarks, Director of RTC Indonesia, Mr. Harry Mulya, appreciated all resource persons and participants for supporting the events. Hopefully, all participants understand the digital transformation process within the scope of customs and get to know the innovation in public policy and

In conclusion, digital transformation is definitely important in assisting customs to improve its service and protection to the community. Implementing the right strategy is important to maximize the usage and deployment of available technologies. These three days conference hopefully could bring new insight to lead customs to continuously innovate to meet an endless challenge faced by the customs communities.

Puspitasari Yunita-International Training Team

An overview of Philippines Customs' journey towards transformation

By Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero, Commissioner, Philippines Bureau of Customs

When I was appointed to the top position in the Philippines Bureau of Customs (BOC) in October 2018, I was confronted with challenges aplenty, from administrative to operational concerns and systemic deficiencies that made the Bureau vulnerable to corrupt practices. For more than two years now, my team and I have been working tirelessly to reform the negatives, transform the organization, and perform our mandate.

People

The first priority was to boost the organization's manpower component to ensure efficiency and professionalism in the delivery of services. Believing firmly that an organization is not an organization without its people, we reviewed the recruitment process to ensure strict adherence to the hiring and promotion procedures established by the Civil Service Commission Rules and Regulations. Our aim was to revive the principle of meritocracy and professionalism, starting with a fair assessment of all applicants. One of our primary focuses was filling vacant positions, a task which the BOC's Human Resource Management Division (HRMD) delivered efficiently.

Enabling employees to develop their skills was identified as another essential area calling for improvement, and as one of our priority programmes in 2020. The actions implemented included updating training policies and guidelines, improving the management and technical skills training curricula, initiating the transition to a competency-based human resource approach, and preparing for the establishment of the Customs Training Institute within the Philippine Tax Academy.

To date, we have completed the policies and guidelines for participation in the learning and development programmes, and in the Scholarship Programme which enables employees to undertake graduate and post-graduate studies and benefit from other educational opportunities. The Interim Training and Development Division (ITDD) coordinates with the inviting/sponsoring organizations to agree on the details of the programme curriculum and enrolment requirements. Once endorsed, these details are disseminated to all employees who can then send their application to the ITDD if they fit the scholarship candidate profile. The ITDD then evaluates the applications and sends the Commissioner the list of pre-selected applicants for potential

nomination. Upon approval of the list of nominees by the Commissioner, the inviting/sponsoring organizations proceed with their own screening process. All the nominees selected must fulfil the requirement to serve with the Bureau of Customs for a period equivalent to twice the length of the scholarship.

We have also put a great deal of work into the completion of the database and the pool of BOC trainers, speakers and experts, and into carrying out 180 activities as part of our learning and development programmes in 2020, in which a total of 5,570 employees participated.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not prevented employees from developing new competencies and strengthening their skills thanks to one of the flagship initiatives of the BOC's modernization programme, the Online Learning Portal (<https://training.customs.gov.ph>), which was launched in June 2020.

In January 2021 the BOC deployed tools enabling the Administration to use a competency-based approach. These include:

A Competency Catalogue listing 89 identified competencies relevant to the BOC.

A Competency Framework which takes the form of a diagram that brings together the competencies in three groups: Core, Functional and Leadership.

A Competency Dictionary which provides not only a definition of each competency but also the behavioural indicators associated with it, making it possible to monitor competency levels and proficiencies as well as individual progression.

Job Profiles for the 125 existing positions within the BOC, identifying the competencies required for each job and their respective behavioural indicators.

Revised Qualification Standards which establish minimum requirements and competency levels for each of the 125 positions.

With the integration of these tools to the human resource management systems, employees will soon have a clear view of their role and performance criteria, and the Administration will be able to properly manage recruitment, succession planning, expectations, and evaluations.



The BOC also asked the WCO Secretariat for support, and benefited from a People Development Diagnostic Virtual Mission in March 2021. This addressed topics such as strategic orientation, competency and job profiling, planning and performance management, training, career path development, remuneration and benefits.

COVID-19

Our reform agenda was gaining momentum when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. The pandemic brought about an urgent need for businesses and organizations to protect their own employees and guarantee their wellbeing, while also pursuing efficient and profitable operations.

As one of the agencies providing frontline services, and the government's arm in essential commodity supply chain, any disruption in BOC operations would have been detrimental to the government effort to handle the health crisis. To protect the health of the men and women in the BOC who were working to prevent a total economic downturn, all mandated health protocols, such as social distancing, were strictly adhered to, and regular swabs and rapid tests on all our employees were conducted.



In accordance with national health and safety measures, weekly disinfection of facilities has been carried out consistently since March 2020 in the Customs Central Office and the Customs offices located in the country's biggest ports, namely, the Port of Manila, Manila International Container Port and Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Personal protection equipment (PPE) and medical supplies, such as facemasks, gloves, alcohol-based cleaners and wipes, footbaths and thermal scanners have moreover been distributed in the BOC Central Office and the major ports.

It was also decided to implement alternative work arrangements. These comprise work-from-home arrangements, four-day or compressed working weeks, and the maintenance of a skeleton workforce with a minimum number of employees on site in the office to guarantee essential services. Such arrangements required staff to submit reports on their work to their respective manager for monitoring purposes. The ultimate objective was to limit the movement of critical workers and thus minimize physical contacts. Furthermore, in view of the limited public transportation in operation, a shuttle van service was made available to employees who were on duty as part of the skeleton workforce, for their convenience and safety.

System

Thankfully, the BOC had finalized several computerized systems before the COVID-19 outbreak. The priority programmes implemented in 2019 and 2020 included the review of policies and processes, as well as heavy investment in information and communications technology (ICT) to automate Customs operations, so as to promote trade facilitation and minimal human interaction. Like many other administrations, the BOC's ability to ensure the continuity of its operations during the peak of the COVID pandemic, while placing a premium on the safety of its workforce, was mainly thanks to the Bureau's IT system upgrades in 2019 and its drive to fully automate frontline transactions by 2020.

The BOC also launched a Customer Care Portal System (CCPS) in February 2020. A ticketing system, CCPS, allows trade operators to submit their concerns, complaints or questions electronically, as well as to upload documents. Like the Customs automated system, the CCPS is part of the implementation of the no-contact policy which promotes a corruption-free regime by minimizing face-to-face transactions. During the quarantine



period, it enabled the BOC to keep serving stakeholders while lowering the chances of BOC personnel entering into contact with the virus. The CCPS also features a “knowledge base” with information on a series of requirements and regulations attached to the international movement of goods. It serves as a one-stop-shop information centre.

Another technology-related initiative is the Internal Administration Management Support system (IAMS), which aims at bringing to a close the era of the largely manual and paper-based organization of the Bureau. It covers the main human resource management processes such as recruitment, training and development, records management, processing of leave applications, payroll management and supplies management.

Infrastructure

Among the various challenges confronting the BOC are poor office accommodation and inadequate equipment and infrastructure. To improve offices and facilities and create a workspace that is conducive to professional and productive output, a plan was drafted prioritizing the most urgent actions to be taken, given our limited financial resources.

One of the first achievements was the construction of a new prefabricated workspace for the Port of Manila's operations and administrative personnel, as well as its District Collector and Deputy Collectors. Inaugurated in October 2020, the 1,004.8 sqm office was designed to enhance efficiency and coordination among its occupants.

A new Customs Operations Centre also opened in December 2020. Designed to house the different intelligence, enforcement, risk management and scanning systems of the Bureau, the Centre's officers are to help enhance the operations of the 17 Collection Districts located across the country, and aid their peers from the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) and Enforcement and Security Service (ESS) in the efficient discharge of their functions.

Lastly, the BOC has purchased equipment needed for employees to carry out their duties effectively, including 65 rifles for Customs enforcement officers in charge of securing the national borders.

In any organization, performance can also be measured by the level of joy and meaning employees get from their work. This will automatically reflect on the quality of the service provided to trade operators, the nation and the individual Filipino.

Value

The Bureau's core values are professionalism, integrity and accountability. The BOC recognizes the importance of having a shared vision and values among its personnel in order to enhance not only performance at the organization level but also individual personal development. To promote these values among its employees, the Bureau has developed several tools under a global Performance Governance System (PGS), including the Governance Culture Code as the handbook for BOC employees. This sets the standards for establishing and sustaining a culture of competence, accountability, professionalism, integrity, transparency, efficiency and ethical responsibility. The objective is to guide decision-makers, ensure that any action taken is in compliance with global standards and regulations and, ultimately, build trust both with BOC external stakeholders as well as among its employees.

Motivation

In any organization, performance can also be measured by the level of joy and meaning employees get from their work. This will automatically reflect on the quality of the service provided to trade operators, the nation and the individual Filipino. To encourage the dedication and discipline of our team of professional men and women, and keep them motivated, driven and

safe, is therefore a top priority – my first priority. With this in mind, the BOC has reviewed its policy on awards and other forms of recognition in order to motivate all personnel to perform with professionalism, integrity and excellence. The BOC's Human Resource and Management Division (HRMD) has developed a fair system for compensation, privileges, and benefits, as well as performance-based incentives, and communicated the details to all employees.

The WCO tools of the cross-border E-Commerce



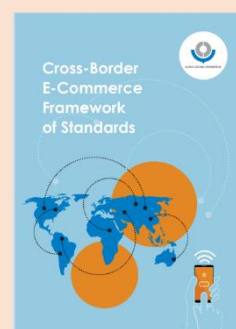
Ms. Yuko Mamiya

Program Manager and CCF/Japan Operation Manager, ROCB A/P

1. Introduction

The COVID19 pandemic has promoted an expansion of E-Commerce (both domestic and cross-border) since consumers have shifted to digital shopping in order to limit physical contact and avoid contagion. Needless to say that the same applies to the Asia Pacific region. According to the OECD report, E-Commerce had already increased significantly during the first quarter of 2020 in the Asia Pacific region . With the rapid expansion of cross-border E-Commerce, a tsunami of packages is being sent across borders. Under such circumstances, Customs and other border agencies have endeavored to ensure the facilitation of legitimate cross-border E-Commerce.

The WCO and its Members have developed the E-Commerce Package which includes the Framework of Standards on cross-border E-Commerce and tools to support implementation. This article outlines each standard while introducing the Technical Specifications of this Framework in order to enable Members to become familiarized with these tools.



2. Characteristics of “Cross-border E-Commerce”

“Cross-border E-Commerce” in the Framework of Standards is characterized as follows:

- Online ordering, sale, communication and, if applicable, payment,
- Cross-border transactions/shipments,
- Physical (tangible) goods, and
- Destined to consumer/buyer (commercial and non-commercial).

This Framework is expected to be applied mainly to Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) transactions. However, Members are encouraged to apply the same principles and standards to Business-to-Business (B2B) transactions.

3. Outline of Framework of Standards on Cross-border E-Commerce

The Framework provides standards for the implementation of the principles outlined in the “Resolution on Cross-Border E-Commerce (the Luxor Resolution)” which was endorsed at the WCO Policy Commission in December 2017. The Luxor Resolution outlines the eight guiding principles for cross-border E-Commerce as below:

- (1) Advance Electronic Data and Risk Management
- (2) Facilitation and Simplification of Procedures
- (3) Safety and Security
- (4) Revenue Collection
- (5) Measurement and Analysis
- (6) Partnerships
- (7) Public Awareness, Outreach and Capacity Building
- (8) Legislative Frameworks.

Based on these principles, 15 baseline global standards have been set in the Framework of Standards.

4. Outline of the respective standard and its technical specifications

- (1) Advance Electronic Data and Risk Management

Standard 1: Legal Framework for Advance Electronic Data

This Standard stipulates the necessity of legislation to exchange advance electronic data with relevant parties involved in E-Commerce.

Technical Specifications

The legal framework for advance electronic data includes “Regulated Data Set” and “Data Privacy and Protection”.

As for “Regulated Data Set”, Customs should regulate a data set to conduct a risk assessment appropriately and clearly stipulate the details including the purpose, the method for collecting the data, etc. to ensure transparency. In order to mitigate the burden of the parties in the E-Commerce supply chain which provides data, Customs should require the minimum data

necessary to achieve the purpose.

As for “Data Privacy and Protection”, Customs should record and save data appropriately and take all necessary measures to ensure the integrity, security, confidentiality and availability of the electronic data.

Standard 2: Use of International Standards for Advance Electronic Data

This standard encourages the implementation of the relevant WCO and other international standards and guidance in accordance with national policy.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should use the WCO Data Model to facilitate the submission and exchange of advance electronic data. Also, it is essential to ensure data quality to effectively conduct risk management.

A data exchange mechanism should be established for the exchange of advance electronic data with stakeholders at the national level. The centralized platform including Single Window Environment enables Customs and other government agencies to access the same electronic data submitted by stakeholders.

Standard 3: Risk Management for Facilitation and Control

This standard encourages Customs administrations to apply dynamic risk management which is specifically developed for E-Commerce. Dynamic risk management means the risk assessment techniques and their respective systems which dynamically adapt to emerging trends and ensure the identification of relevant parties and the traceability of shipments and transactions.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should adopt different approaches for working with compliant/non-compliant parties and develop risk profiles based on pattern analysis in order to identify whether unknown trade parties are compliant. Furthermore, the information on offenders should be identified and stored by Customs in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies and relevant parties in the E-Commerce supply chain to the extent permitted by national and international laws.

Standard 4: Use of Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Technologies and Data Analytics

This standard encourages Customs administrations to utilize the NII equipment to facilitate cross-border E-Commerce flows while strengthening Customs controls.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should use the data produced by NII including scanned images of cargo while combining with advance electronic data and other data sources to improve efficiency. The Specifications also recommend utilizing data analytics and applicable technologies which will simplify the identification of risks to facilitate legitimate trade and strategically secure respective borders.

(2) Facilitation and Simplification

Standard 5: Simplified Clearance Procedures

This standard encourages Customs administrations to establish and maintain simplified clearance formalities/procedures utilizing pre-arrival processing, risk assessment and procedures for the immediate release of low-risk shipments on arrival or departure in cooperation with other relevant government agencies.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should apply the WCO Immediate Release Guidelines and release low-value goods immediately upon arrival while maintaining appropriate Customs controls and ensuring the collection of duties and/or taxes.

Also, Customs should allow for a simplified return and refund procedure wherever appropriate. Existing formalities may be revised and/or new procedures to require reporting may be adopted because of evolving E-Commerce business models and the needs of Micro, Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), etc.

Standard 6: Expanding the Concept of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) to Cross-Border E-Commerce

This standard encourages Customs administrations to apply AEO Programmes and Mutual Recognition Arrangements/Agreements in the context of cross-border E-Commerce.

Technical Specifications

The Specifications recommend strengthening partnerships between Customs and the private sector such as e-vendors, platforms, market places and intermediaries by exploring the

possibilities to include them in the WCO SAFE AEO or other trusted trader programmes. Having said that, the general conditions and criteria regarding compliance and security should be met by the intermediaries so that the integrity of the AEO Programme has been ensured.

The AEO Programme will give intermediaries the incentive to continuously perform self-monitoring and effectively cooperate with supply chain parties by providing tangible benefits.

(3) Fair and Efficient Revenue Collection

Standard 7: Models of Revenue Collection

This standard encourages Customs administrations to apply various types of models of revenue collection. In order to ensure revenue collection, Customs administrations should offer electronic payment options, provide relevant information online, allow for flexible payment types and ensure fairness and transparency.

Technical Specifications

There is a number of approaches to revenue collection including “Seller/Vendor based collection”, “Intermediary based collection” and Buyer/Consumer based collection. Collection methods should be efficient, widely applicable and flexible while promoting fairness and transparency.

Given that Customs and Tax authorities share similar concerns regarding the potential revenue loss and distortionary impact on domestic retailers, etc., the two authorities should closely cooperate on those issues and develop a coherent and cohesive tax policy including consideration of a single payment solution. The Specifications encourage Customs to exchange data with Tax authorities by establishing and/or reinforcing proper interconnectivity between IT systems.

Standard 8: De Minimis

This standard encourages governments to make fully informed decisions when reviewing and/or adjusting de minimis thresholds for duties and/or taxes.

Technical Specifications

Governments should notify the WCO of the de minimis information and any changes thereto so that the WCO can publish the information on its website as part of a global repository for interested parties.

Governments should carefully consider the economic and social impact of their respective de minimis thresholds when considering a review or an adjustment of de minimis thresholds. A

balance is required between economic growth from cross-border E-Commerce trade and a healthy competitive environment that allows domestic markets to continue to flourish.

(4) Safety and Security

Standard 9: Prevention of Fraud and Illicit Trade

This standard encourages Customs administrations to work with other relevant government agencies to establish procedures for analysis and investigations of illicit cross-border E-Commerce activities.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should enhance cooperation with other relevant government agencies and E-Commerce stakeholders to combat illicit activities in accordance with the international standards such as the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards, Annexes 9 and 17 of ICAO's Chicago Convention, and the IMO FAL and SOLAS Conventions.

In accordance with national laws and regulations, Customs are encouraged to establish mechanisms and associated capabilities to carry out investigations including following digital trails, unearthing financial flows, identifying and tracking "darknet" activities, handling seized goods and management of evidence.

Standard 10: Inter-Agency Co-operation and Information Sharing

This standard encourages the governments to establish cooperation frameworks between and among various national agencies through electronic mechanisms including Single Window.

Technical Specifications

Given that the E-Commerce environment often requires real-time response or intervention by all relevant government agencies to ensure the facilitation of legitimate trade, risk assessments conducted by Customs should take into account the screening previously performed by relevant agencies to avoid duplication of enforcement. The Specifications also encourage Customs to carry out joint investigations at national and international levels.

Customs administrations should establish a national centralized platform such as a National Single Window in cooperation with other relevant border agencies. Besides, the Specifications recommend establishing a National Targeting Centre which enables Customs and relevant border agencies to conduct coordinated pre-arrival data screening and targeting for integrated and holistic risk management.

(5) Partnerships

Standard 11: Public-Private Partnerships

This standard encourages Customs administrations to establish and strengthen the cooperative relationship with E-Commerce stakeholders.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should explore opportunities for information sharing with E-Commerce stakeholders to prevent illegal trade to the extent permitted by legislation and regulations. Establishing a standard method of exchanging data with E-Commerce stakeholders through an electronic interface and common messaging standards should be considered.

Cooperative partnerships with the private sector include AEO/Trusted Trader Programmes and other arrangements such as Memoranda of Understanding.

Standard 12: International Co-operation

This standard encourages Customs administrations to expand Customs cooperation and partnerships to ensure compliance and facilitation of cross-border E-Commerce.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should establish cooperation and partnerships through international agreements or arrangements such as Agreements on Customs Co-operation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters to detect, prevent and combat Customs fraud. The cooperative agreements and arrangements among Customs administrations include the use of Smart and Secure Trade Lanes which enables to share the smart (high-quality) data between Customs in the export country and import country.

The Specifications also encourage Customs to utilize the Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices and Customs Enforcement Network to share seizure information related to E-Commerce.

(6) Public Awareness, Outreach and Capacity Building

Standard 13: Communication, Public Awareness and Outreach

This standard encourages Customs administrations to raise public awareness of the regulatory requirements, risks and responsibilities associated with cross-border E-Commerce.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should openly and transparently publish on their websites all appropriate laws, regulations and procedural information relating to E-Commerce.

Also, Customs should educate all stakeholders by providing them with relevant regulatory,

compliance and security information so that stakeholders can disseminate through their own platforms and partner networks and communicate that information to their respective users or clients effectively.

Customs should find opportunities to exchange information on illegal E-Commerce activities directly with trusted e-vendors/platforms/marketplaces, intermediaries and other stakeholders for raising their awareness.

(7) Measurement and Analysis

Standard 14: Mechanism of Measurement

This standard encourages Customs administrations to accurately capture, measure, analyze and publish cross-border E-Commerce statistics.

Technical Specifications

Statistics on cross-border E-Commerce goods should cover transactions between all parties engaged in international trade as well as all relevant dimensions of international trade including geographic locations, product type, quantity, the value of the goods, etc. to the extent possible.

The main sources for the measurement of data include the systems of Customs, logistics providers, postal and express operators and e-vendors/platforms/marketplaces within boundaries of national laws.

Customs are encouraged to collect data for statistical purposes and policy analysis without creating an additional burden on E-Commerce stakeholders.

The measurement of cross-border E-Commerce goods should follow the international standards as outlined in International Merchandise Trade Statistics to the extent possible.

(8) Leveraging Transformative Technologies

Standard 15: Explore Technological Developments and Innovation

This standard encourages Customs administrations to explore innovative technological developments for more effective and efficient control and facilitation of cross-border E-Commerce.

Technical Specifications

Customs administrations should work with relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities being created by new technologies including the Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, blockchain and cloud computing.

In order to address the challenges concerning the enormous development of E-Commerce, decreasing staff numbers, etc., Customs are encouraged to seek research and development regarding the validated application of automated detection technology architectures.

5. Way forward

The growth of cross-border E-Commerce has a strong effect on the various Customs topics including free zones, risk management, etc. Consequently, Customs administrations have been facing a number of new challenges concerning cross-border E-Commerce in the various Customs fields. The WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce provides guidance for Customs, other government agencies, the private sector and stakeholders to address the challenges presented by the cross-border E-Commerce and enhance the trade facilitation while combating the illegal activities. In order to implement the Standards, the WCO also developed the E-Commerce Package which is designed to provide necessary resource guidance to Members and relevant stakeholders.

ROCB A/P is more than happy to assist the AP Members in building their capacity in the context of E-Commerce in close cooperation with the WCO by assisting in organizing the WCO Regional, Sub-Regional and National Workshops as well as promoting the WCO tools and instruments.

For more information and inquiries, please contact the ROCB A/P at rocb@rocbap.org

The role of ROCB A/P in the COVID-19 pandemic

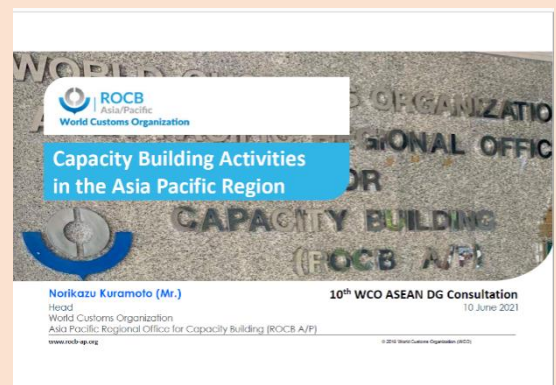


Ms. Grace YE
Program Manager

Introduction

Needless to say, COVID-19 had a great impact on the world. It also had a great impact on the situation surrounding international trade and Customs as well as urged a response to it. It also had a great impact on the capacity building activities, which is ROCB's main business, and we were also forced to respond.

As a dedicated training organization, ROCB A/P reconfirmed that human resource development is important to deal with such emergent situations. In addition to that, we are fully aware of the importance of capacity building and the high expectations for ROCB A/P as an implementing organization. This is why we did not stop.



We fully recognize that the role of ROCB A/P is expanding in the COVID-19 situation and we know that we need to improve. Therefore, ROCB A/P has been making a resilient effort since the March 2019 Pandemic Declaration. We have adapted to maximize our role by utilizing methods that are in line with current era.

In my essay, I would like to introduce the new features of ROCB A/P and current efforts in the COVID-19 pandemic.

New features and ROCB A/P effort in the COVID-19 era

1. Organizing Virtual Workshops

As you know, ROCB A/P's major mission is to perform effective and efficient capacity building activities in close cooperation with regional members. Due to the unprecedented situation with restrictive measures generated by the COVID-19 pandemic impacting the working environment, ROCB A/P immediately took action to start organizing virtual workshops. This new meeting process has now become the 'new normal' under the current circumstances.

ROCB A/P is not just coordinating Capacity Building programs but also cautious about the quality. In order to provide high-quality workshops, we have attached great attention to the annual needs survey. Referring to the needs from Members as well as the priority of the WCO, ROCB A/P will discuss with the Regional Vice-Chair and WCO



Regional Capacity Building Manager to finalize the annual work plan. During the process of preparing the workshop, the Program Manager from ROCB A/P will have the deep exchanges with the WCO Experts to ensure the topics delivered at the workshop are focused and are of common interest to Members. Moreover, ROCB A/P conducts the follow-up action after the workshop has ended to evaluate whether the knowledge obtained from the WCO Workshops can strengthen their skills and capacities in performing the Customs roles and functions in their home administrations. The follow-up action also offers a greater insight into the future improvement for ROCB A/P to guarantee long term sustainable delivery of capacity Building for Members.

During the FY 2020/21, ROCB A/P has conducted 8 regional workshops, 4 sub-regional workshops as well as supported coordination of national workshops. Members emphasized virtual workshops are one of the most valuable occasions for them to exchange views on the focus areas of the region. They also highlighted the importance of such online workshops in contributing to enhanced collaboration to overcome the negative effects caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

ROCB A/P will continuously dedicate itself to giving support to Members in the capacity building needs assessment process and coordinating the capacity building activities in the AP region.

2. Expanding supplementary channels of sharing knowledge and information

To update information on how Customs administrations have helped mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ROCB A/P endeavours to expand channels to enhance information-sharing among Members.

On top of virtual workshops, ROCB A/P publishes E-newsletters and Customs Good Practice Report which are the most paramount supplementary channels to share knowledge and information among Members.

ROCB A/P issues E-newsletter quarterly. Special essays, briefs on the WCO workshops and meetings as well as ROCB AP staff update are included in our E-Newsletters. As for the Special Essays, Program managers as experts of ROCB A/P are invited to write articles on priority Customs topics and WCO key standards. The essays are written in an easy-to-understand manner to keep readers updated with the WCO tools and instruments. In this fiscal year, ROCB A/P issued over ten essays, for example on PCA, SIEs, API/PNR, IPR, Free Zone and WCO illicit trade report. For the Customs Good Practice Report, ROCB A/P will choose one important topic and invite Members to submit their national practice reports on the related area and combine these valuable reports together for exchanging the information among Members.

3. Encouraging/Supporting more entities accredited as RTCs/RCLs/RDTCs in the AP Region

In order to improve Member Customs Capacity Building, the Regional entities such as the Regional Training Centres (RTCs), the Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) as well as the Regional Dog Training Centre (RDTC) were established. The RTCs focus on bringing specialist training closer to the end-users through the development of regional training expertise and the expansion of the blended learning network. The functions of the Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) and the Regional Dog Training Centre (RDTC) are to provide training and information sharing on chemical analysis of goods for classification and trade controls and on canine operation in the fight against illicit trafficking respectively.

Through the delivery of regionally relevant and adapted training and training services, the RTCs/RCLs/RDTCs have critical roles to play in the capacity improvement of Member Customs. Up till now, we have 8 RTCs, 5 RCLs and 2 RDTCs in the AP region.

Recently, Nanjing Customs Laboratory of China Customs has finally been established. In addition to that, Indonesian Customs have established RTC and RCL respectively, India Customs established RCL, and Korean Customs established RDTC. Along their journey to become RTC, RCL and RDTC. ROCB A/P has continuously supported and provided professional advice to support Me

mbers. Becoming the RTC, RCL and RDTC is just the first step. ROCB A/P will reinforce the communication and coordination between all the regional entities at a regional level to offer training facilities and provide technical assistance transferring for the AP Members.

4. Providing Network hub

Every year, ROCB A/P organizes RTC Heads Meeting. The objective of the meeting is to discuss issues of common interest in the AP region and to exchange views and experiences related to Capacity Building. All RTCs are invited to share information on their respective latest activities and initiatives. The forward-looking discussions among RTCs contribute to further progress of the region through enhanced regional cooperation on Capacity Building.



ROCB A/P also plans to have the first RCL Heads Meeting in this fiscal year and RDTC Heads Meeting will be expected in the near future. These meetings will offer the great opportunity to share regional updates on strategies and initiatives and emerging issues to be tackled. Also, these meeting are expected to provide a greater insight into the organizational development of Customs administrations and identify regional synergies and future opportunities for collaboration.

Way forward

As we all know, the achievements of the ROCB A/P since its establishment are many. However, the opportunities to improve and the challenges ahead are significant.

Despite COVID-19, ROCB A/P will continuously provide Members in AP region with Customs Capacity Building activities in creative, diverse and inspiring ways. At the same time, we are now preparing to resume the face-to-face workshops in the near future. ROCB A/P will devote itself to making contributions to the post-pandemic recovery and foster collective action to ensure "Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a sustainable supply chain".

For further enquiries on the article, please contact me at rocb@rocbap.org

Highlights of the 5th WCO Global AEO Conference

– Technology, Cooperation and Evolution of AEO Programme –



Ms. Sherman YU

Program Manager for the Southeast Asia of ROCB A/P

Introduction

Did you attend the latest WCO Global AEO Conference? The 5th WCO Global AEO Conference was held virtually from 25 – 27 May 2021 in Dubai hosted by Dubai Customs and the Federal Customs Authority (FCA) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Over 3,917 participants from 158 member administrations of WCO as well as stakeholders participated in this event.

It has been more than 15 years since the AEO concept was recognized by Customs administrations around the world and has been implemented globally, nevertheless the AEO programme is still required to take on challenges and innovations that correspond to the new era. This conference was very informative and provided insights to them. In my article, I would like to highlight certain topics of the Conference and points of interest as an AEO expert.



Theme: 'AEO 2.0: advancing towards new horizons for sustainable and secure trade'

The theme of this Conference was ‘**AEO 2.0: advancing towards new horizons for sustainable and secure trade**’. The SAFE Framework implemented in 2011 safeguards the global supply chain security and provides trade facilitation to stakeholders. Over this time the AEO programme has been evolving and adapting according to the latest development in technology, expectations as well as cooperation from business sectors.

Message from WCO Secretary General, Dr Kunio Mikuriya

The WCO Secretary General, Dr Kunio Mikuriya kick-started the event by delivering an opening speech followed by the 1st high-level panel discussion. During the discussion, Dr Mikuriya provided encouraging statistics to elaborate on the substantive achievements of the AEO programme and the implementation of MRAs¹. He expressed that these are vital tools in supporting business. However, he also acknowledged that there is room to improve with tackling challenges to the development of the

AEO programme. For example, the expansion of coverage of economic operators, harmonization of authorization standards, IT systems and cooperation with other government agencies. This is due to the fact that their automation was not operated at the same level which hinders seamless clearance not only with Customs-to-Customs but also with Customs to Business. This also makes AEO validations difficult and undermines the mutual recognition under the MRA between Customs Administrations.



Highlights of the panel discussions in the Conference

Throughout the 3-day Conference, many topics and latest developments were shared and discussed through panel discussions and keynote speeches. As an AEO expert, I would like to highlight 3 topics of interest for further discussion, namely ‘Importance of application of technology & Blockchain’, ‘Inter-government agencies cooperation’ and ‘Evolution of AEO programme’

¹ From 2011 to 2021, the number of AEO programmes in place increased from 45 to 97 whereas the MRAs signed increased from 19 to 91.

i) Importance of application of technology & Blockchain

Without any doubt, all Conference speakers stressed the importance of digitalization, automation and application of technology. In the 1st panel discussion, Mr. Gerassimos Thomas² pointed out that not only do Customs administrations have to use but they have to manage the technology, as shown when e-commerce flourished during the pandemic. Mr. M. Ajit Kumar³ shared this point



of view and further added that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be accorded higher priority so that 'the machine [system] can learn and search patterns of crime/ smuggling'.

In *WCO News 94 February 2021's* issue, the writers⁴ mentioned the importance of using blockchain for improving data sharing and also listed out the reasons why using technology is of particular importance in times of pandemic⁵. Blockchain has become a focus of database development and IT security in recent years. Its decentralized structure and nature makes it highly secure as the database is not controlled by 1 single user or entity. Another characteristic of blockchain technology is the data storage is 'irreversible' which give a mission impossible to the hacker who wants to break into the database⁶. In fact, in response to the question about 'what innovative or technology-based approaches could be adopted to facilitate cooperation and harmonization between Customs, OGAs and intergovernmental organization?' in the 2nd panel



² Mr. Gerassimos Thomas is the Director General of the Directorate General for Taxation and Customs Union, European Commission

³ Mr. M. Ajit Kumar is the Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, India and he shared the experience of India Customs in the application of technology

⁴ See 'Improving data sharing with blockchain' and 'Technology in times of pandemic', WCO News 94 February 2021's issue

⁵ Under the Covid's new norm of working, officers have to work from home or avoid face-to-face contacting with the stakeholders. Yet, Customs administrations have to expedite the customs clearance speed so as to make sure essential items for general public can be delivered promptly. Therefore, this drove the Customs administration to rely on technology to streamline the procedures and achieve automation as far as practicable.

⁶ See *Blockchain explained* (Source: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/blockchain.asp>)

discussion, speakers highly praised blockchain and advocated Customs administrations to adopt this technology with haste. Taking this opportunity, Ms. Sandra Corcuera Santamaria⁷, briefly explained the block-chain-based application named CADENA⁸ to participants, which was developed in several Customs administrations in Latin America, enabling the sharing and recording information of AEOs between the countries involved.

‘New Governance; New Procedures’ put the dire need of technology application in a nutshell. To fulfil the expectation from business sectors, Customs administrations have to change their operation mode of relying on paper/ document submission to digitalization.

ii) Inter-government agencies cooperation

Apart from technology, Pillar 3 of the SAFE framework (Customs to Other Government and Inter-Government Agencies) was robustly discussed in the Conference. Supply chain management is never a simple ‘1 to 1’ business relationship, rather it is a ‘1 to many’ or ‘many to many’ operation. Instead of saying it is a ‘supply chain’, maybe it is more appropriate to term it as ‘supply chain web’. In the presentation of Dr. Juanita Maree⁹, she mentioned that supply chain management is ‘never easy to see through’ due to the complicated and multi-faceted situation which involves different parties and multiple government agencies to keep the things working. Therefore, inter-government agency cooperation is vital in handling this intertwined nature of operations.

Mr. Abel Kagumire¹⁰ shared Uganda Customs’ experience of which they set up Single Window, respective working groups for trade facilitation to achieve ‘Coordinated Border Management’ with other government agencies. Followed by Mr. Abel Kagumire’s presentation, another speaker, Mr. Marcello Minenna¹¹ further explained that the



cooperation should not only be confined to a national level but also extend to the international context. Also, multilateral cooperation is encouraged as this can foster harmonized trade around the globe. In his opinion, the gist of the inter-government cooperation is to avoid duplication of

⁷ Ms. Sandra Corcuera Santamaria is the Customs and Trade Senior Specialist, InterAmerican Development Bank.

⁸ Elaboration on CADENA can be read from ‘CADENA, a blockchain enabled solution for the implementation of Mutual Recognition Arrangements/Agreements’ in *WCO News 87 February 2018 October’s* issue and ‘Improving data sharing with blockchain’ in *WCO News 94 February 2021’s* issue.

⁹ Dr. Juanita Maree is the Chair of the South African Association of Freight Forwarders Board

¹⁰ Mr. Abel Kagumire is the Customs Commissioner, Uganda Revenue Authority.

¹¹ Mr. Marcello Minenna is the Director General of the Italian Customs and Monopolies Agency.

work or documentation submitted by the business sector and reduce the red-tape therein.

To achieve a close partnership, technology with same data platform, same protocol/standard which enables information sharing is the key to success. For this, Mr. Pascal Clivaz¹² used postage clearance as an example to illustrate: In Universal Postal Union (UPU), there are altogether 20 designated operators and 9 out of them have AEO status. In order to have an efficient and coherent handling of postage packages, they have to comply with a code of practice and security standards. Furthermore, UPU adopted e-advance data that makes the risk profiling conducted by Customs or other enforcement agencies more efficient and effective. UPU commented that with the help of technological advancements, the time of inspection and clearance have greatly reduced. Thus, a win-win situation is achieved for Customs, other government agencies and stakeholders.

iii) Evolution of AEO programme

The Conference is expected to be a platform for participants to exchange innovative ideas and visions, examine potential opportunities, and explore the steps required to elevate global best practice in trade facilitation to the next level (AEO 2.0). AEO is not a statistics collating programme. It should be modified and uplifted according to the changes in business, social and economic development. In view of this, the WCO hope AEO will continue to evolve, enrich and strengthen its content.

Long before the 5th WCO Global AEO Conference, SAFE Working Group (SWG) already kick-started the SAFE review cycle in 2019 and launched discussion on AEO 2.0 content¹³. Against this background, the organizer of 5th WCO Global AEO Conference pinpointed certain hot topics for having a more in-depth discussion and laying a solid foundation for a better AEO programme in the future.

It is notable that e-commerce became a growing wave during the pandemic and most of the traders are SMEs or MSMEs. Also, according to studies and research conducted by



¹² Mr. Pascal Clivaz is Deputy Director General of the Universal Postal Union

¹³ See 'SAFE Working Group launches discussion on AEO2.0' (Source: <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2019/april/safe-working-group-launches-discussion-on-aeo-20.aspx>)

international organizations¹⁴, SME accounted for over 95% percent of imports and exports in some major economies e.g. EU. Therefore, the AEO programme has to address the issue of how to extend the scope to e-commerce and its major operators.

In the 3rd panel discussion, Mr. Dietmar Jost¹⁵ suggested that to make AEO programme more 'accessible' for the SMES or MSMEs, simplified Customs rules and outreach programme targeting on these companies are necessary. Another speaker, Ms. Louise Wiggett¹⁶ proposed that Customs administrations have to be aware of the cost implications to SMEs when they become AEOs. She commented from the private sector perspective that AEO certification, validation and subsequent re-certification are regarded as 'high maintenance'. Echoed with Ms Wiggett's standpoint, Mr Jost called for the MRAs to be recognized not bilaterally but multi-laterally so that the customs clearance between countries or even regions can be expedited. All speakers agreed that AEO programme has to be resilient in upholding the security and integrity in the cyber environment, yet have to be flexible at the same time so as to address the needs of SMEs or MSMEs.

Way forward

After the 3-day Conference, some fruitful and inspiring suggestions were resulted and can be summarized as follows:

i) Build up mutual trust between stakeholders and customs administrations



¹⁴ See International trade in goods by enterprise size, EUROSTAT, European Commission (Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/International_trade_in_goods_by_enterprise_size#Overview)

¹⁵ Mr. Dietmar Jost is the Customs and Security Advisor, Global Express Association

¹⁶ Ms. Louise Wiggett is the Chief Executive Officer, Global Trade Solutions

Mutual trust and partnership are based on genuine, sincere and open dialogue. Parties involved in the dialogue have to listen and understand the difficulties that each party is facing and also to understand each others goals. Through continuous effort and negotiation, the gaps in between will be narrowed and consensus or agreement can be reached.

ii) Keep up with the pace of using technology with business

Business sector is the incubator of innovation and IT advancement for they have to keep equipping themselves to face the competition within their sector as well as fulfilling the ever-changing demand from their customers. Comparatively speaking, government agencies and Customs administrations do not need to face such challenges. However, in response to the business sector's request, government agencies and Customs administrations have to catch up with the pace in developing and using technology, otherwise this technological gap will hinder the future cooperation and partnership.

iii) Prioritize the proper implementation of AEO 2.0

No matter if in the SAFE WSG meeting or throughout the WCO Global AEO Conference, lots of innovative ideas, futuristic visions and objective comments were put forward by participants and speakers. Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge the fact that resources, manpower and time are limited. Therefore, we have to prioritize the most critical aspect that we need to tackle first (e.g. the recovery from pandemic) and then implement the AEO 2.0 in a gradually and adaptable manner.

iv) Capacity building

After being an observer at this conference, I have a deeper understanding of the works the ROCB AP needs to disseminate, including the latest information and ideas obtained to our AP members through various capacity building activities. Our office will continue to support the work of WCO and acting as a bridge between the AP members and WCO. For further enquiries on the article, please contact me at shermanyu@rocbap.org

An Introduction of the ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Exemplifying Follow-up Actions After the WCO Regional Workshops in FY 2019/2020



Ms. Pavida Boonmun
Assistant Program Manager, ROCB A/P

Introduction

What is a Follow-up Actions Survey? Have you ever attended a WCO workshop? A WCO workshop itself is a golden opportunity to learn about international standards, knowledge and know-how of Customs operations. Nevertheless, attending workshops is not enough to maximize the benefit. In this regard, further utilizing the lessons learnt in the home administration's efforts toward modernization is the key. All participants are hopefully required to take actions after attending WCO workshop from the viewpoint of expanding of lessons learnt in their home Customs administrations.

The ROCB A/P is dedicated to organizing capacity building activities for WCO Asia Pacific Members to strengthen their skills and capacity in performing Customs roles, "The Follow-up Actions Survey" has been conducted since 2015 after participation in WCO Regional/Sub-regional workshops, to evaluate both the direct and indirect impact of WCO workshops to the administrations' performance and to contribute their further development.

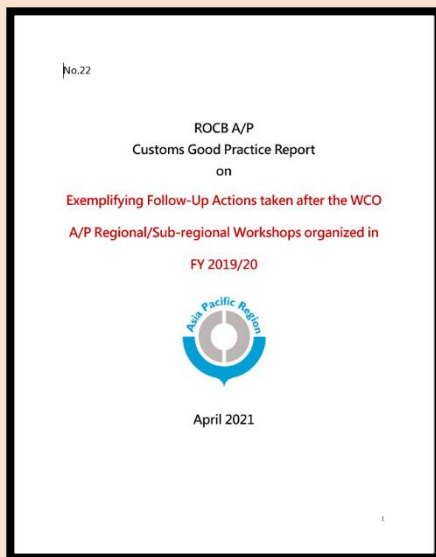
Recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing struggles and challenges to all kinds of activities including our capacity building activities. Many scheduled workshops and meetings have been postponed, we have introduced virtual workshops instead of face-to-face in

order to move our activities forward.

The ROCB A/P are continuing our activities along with the Follow-up Actions Survey as we believe that Members are still able to strengthen their skills and capabilities in performing the Customs roles. This can be achieved by applying lessons learnt and disseminating pertinent information to the right colleagues or divisions for further development of their home administrations after attending WCO workshops even in the pandemic situation.

In my essay, I would like to share the findings of Follow-up Actions Survey of last FY 2019/20 as a latest version.

The Follow-Up Actions Survey 2020



The purpose of the Follow-up Actions Survey does not intend to criticize any reporting or recommendations made by the workshop participants. The main purpose is purely to support and encourage the efforts of participants after the workshop. It is published in the form of a Customs Good Practice Report every year to summarize findings of the survey and aims to take a snapshot of the impact that the capacity building programs have on the performance of the regional Member administrations in terms of work efficiency and effectiveness as well as organizational development. It is also expected to remind workshop participants of their expected roles and encourage them to continuously utilize the skills and knowledge acquired, wherever possible after the respective regional/sub-regional capacity building programs.

As I mentioned above, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, the number of the targeted workshops has decreased compared with the previous period. In FY 2019/2020, among the 4 subjected workshops, 3 were specially designed for sub-regional Members and another one for regional workshop. The total number of replies to the Survey 2020 is 28. In spite of the rate of overall reply increased to 70% (54% in 2019), the rate of reply received from the participants of sub-regional workshops is around 89%. It is regarded as an indication of strong commitment by the sub-regional members and a recognized result of the capacity building effort in addressing sub-regional issues.

What is the Major Follow-up Actions Taken

The Survey 2020 reveals that the most common follow-up actions are sharing/circulation of training materials with colleagues (82%) and submission of reports to superiors (68%), different from the findings in the past surveys which always show that percentage of submission reports to superior is the highest. Other follow-up actions are also reported, namely, making recommendations, organizing in-house workshop, developing operational manuals, and other actions which were listed in the full issue of the survey 2020.

Summary of specific actions of this survey is shown as below.

Specific Actions	No. of reply
✓ Shared training materials with colleagues	82 %
✓ Submitted reports	68 %
✓ Made recommendations	54 %
✓ Organized in-house workshops	39 %
✓ Developed operational manuals	36 %
✓ Others	36 %

Correlations Between Specific Follow-up Actions and Realization of the Direct Effects and Initiation of Modernization Projects

There are proven correlations between follow-up actions and realization of direct effects as well as initiation of new projects. 75% of the respective respondents realized positive effects from circulating/sharing training materials and organizing in-house workshop, while 68% of whom initiated new projects attributed it to the submission of workshop reports and recommendations made to senior officials. In summary, the findings provide convincing proof that taking timely and immediate follow-up actions after joining the WCO workshops will assist Member administrations to realize potential contributions to their national development objectives. These follow-up actions can be as simple as writing reports or more intensive like organizing in-house workshops.

An analysis on the correlation between realization of direct effects and follow-up actions taken was conducted and the finding are shown in Table 1

(Table 1)

	Member participants ¹ shared workshop materials	Member participants organized in-house workshop	Member participants realized direct effects
Total	23	11	12
Numbers and percentage of respective actions presumably led to realizing direct effects	8 (35%)	5 (45%)	-
Number and percentage presumably attributed to sharing materials and/or in-house workshops			9 (75%)

An analysis on the correlation between initiation of modernization projects and follow-up actions taken was conducted and the finding are shown in Table 2.

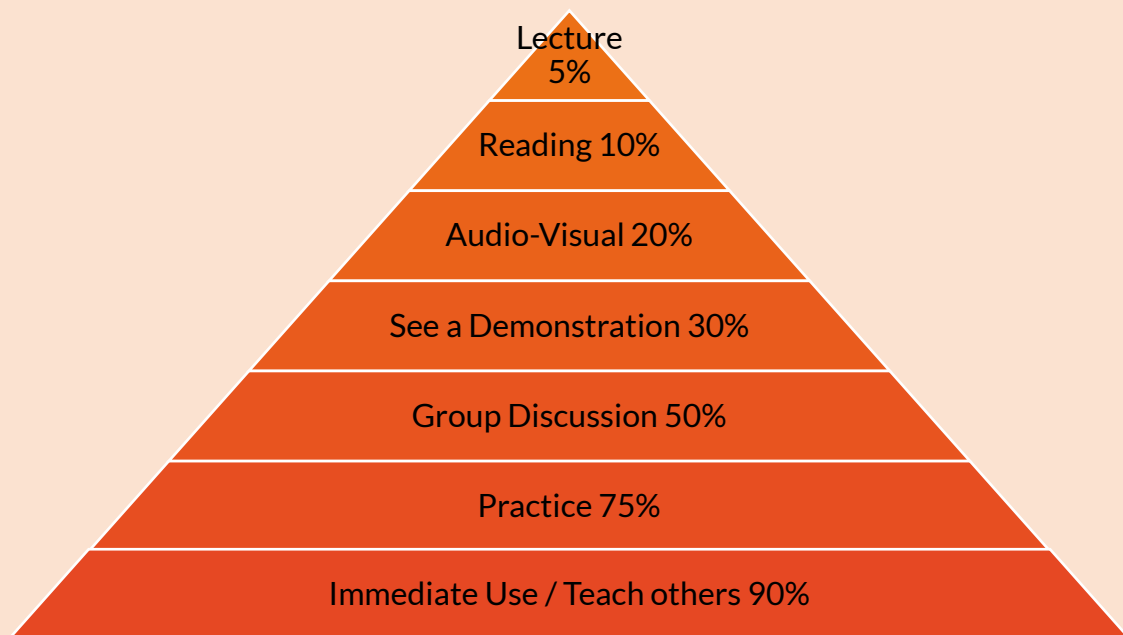
(Table 2)

	Member participants ² submitted reports	Member participants made specific recommendations	Member participants initiated new projects
Total	19	15	19
Numbers and percentage of respective actions presumably led to realizing direct effects	13 (68%)	10 (67%)	--
Number and percentage presumably attributed to sharing materials and/or in-house workshops			13 (68%)

Recommendations

How participants can retain what that learnt from the WCO workshops? What is the most effective action to follow to utilize what they learnt from the workshops and other participants?

Based on the research by the National Training Laboratory Institute as shown below, it shows that learners can retain up to 90% of what they learnt by teaching others or using it immediately. Apart from that, learners can also retain their knowledge by practicing and participating in group discussion at 75% and 50% respectively. However, seeing a demonstration, audio-visual and reading can also be effective but at lesser percentage while lecturing is the least at only 5%.



In this regard, to enhance further organizational development of Members' administrations. ROCB A/P strongly recommends to share material and report to relevant officials in your administrations as soon as possible because it is the easiest action to follow. On the top of that teaching others is one of the best ways to retain information and knowledge. Therefore, the ROCB A/P also recommend Members to conduct in-house training by participants as teachers to transfer their knowledge and experience gained through WCO workshops directly to other officers in their home administrations.

Conclusion

Referring to the findings of Survey 2020, the ROCB A/P observes that many workshop participants shared an abundance of information and knowledge learnt from workshops to the right officers/divisions including practically applying this information and knowledge in their administrations through different kinds of follow-up actions. It also reveals pertinent information on these follow-up actions, providing a snapshot and exemplifying the impact these capacity building programs have had on the performance of regional Member administrations in terms of work efficiency and effectiveness as well as organizational development.

We believe that participation in workshops with clear objectives by officers with strong commitment, along with the shared ownership of Customs administrations is key for harvesting the good fruits from collective efforts towards Customs reform and modernization.

In the next FY, The ROCB A/P will continue capacity building activities with our strong commitment to encourage Member representatives in the WCO workshops to optimize the value of regional capacity building programs in their organizations. The ROCB A/P will continue to evaluate the development progress to further identify the technical assistance needs of Member administrations.

For full issue of Customs Good Practice Report on exemplifying follow-up actions survey No.22, please visit our website at www.rocbap.org or contact me at maypavida@rocbap.org

Workshops and Meetings

ROCB A/P attends the WCO A/P 22nd Regional Heads of Customs Administrative Conference

6-7 April 2021, Online



The WCO A/P 22nd Regional Heads of Customs Administrative Conference (RHCA) was held online from 6 to 7 April organized by the Customs and Excise of the Republic of Indonesia as Vice Chair. More than 50 Delegates from A/P regional Member administrations and Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of WCO discussed important issues for the A/P region such as the endorsement of Regional entities, measures in response to COVID-19 pandemic, the progress with implementation of the WCO A/P Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) 2020-2022, and the Terms of Reference of Regional Private Sector Group Asia/Pacific (ToR of RPSG-AP)..The RILO A/P and the ROCB A/P attended as permanent observers.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya provided the information on the latest WCO policy and initiatives. He highlighted the WCO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the adoption of the "Resolution on the Customs Role in Facilitating the Cross-Border Movement of Situationally Critical Medicines and Vaccines", development of the COVID-19 Action Plan as well as Guidelines

on Disaster Management and Supply Chain Continuity and Operation STOP2 which aims to detect fake COVID-19 vaccine. Dr. Mikuriya also shared the discussions from previous Council, Policy Commission and Finance Committee meetings. Vice Chair and Members expressed appreciation for SG's leadership and outstanding efforts made by the WCO Secretariat to assist Member Customs administrations even during the unprecedented pandemic.

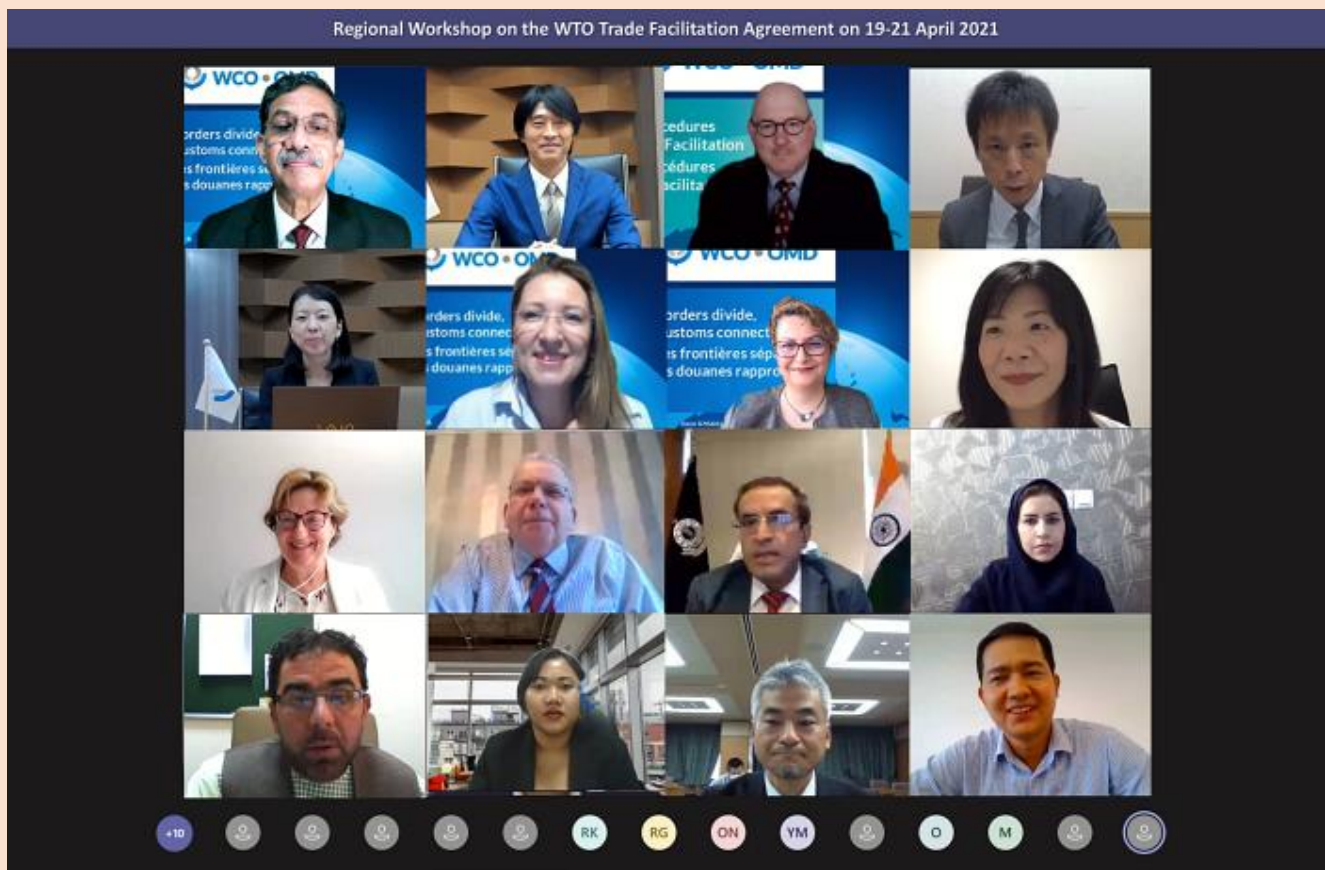
Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P, updated Members on the ROCB A/P's capacity building activities including the ROCB A/P's response to the WCO virtual Workshops and Meetings as well as activities to enhance communication and information sharing among AP Members amid COVID-19. Mr. Kuramoto also reported on the implementation of Focus Area 3 (Capacity Building) of the A/P RSP 2020-2022. Members and RILO A/P expressed their appreciation for ROCB A/P's contribution to the A/P region, support for its activities and a willingness to further collaborate with the ROCB A/P.

During the Meeting, RHCA endorsed the proposals of China hosting the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL). Members have warmly welcomed the new RCL. Also, Members endorsed the ToR of RPSG-AP and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Vice Chair.

Active contributions by delegates and good meeting management by Vice Chair resulted in a successful and fruitful meeting even in challenging times. The delegates called for enhancement of collaboration among AP Members, the WCO, ROCB A/P and RILO A/P.

The WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Online Workshop on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

19-21 April 2021, Online Workshop hosted by ROCB A/P



The WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Online Workshop on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) was held from 19 to 21 April 2021. The Workshop was organized by the WCO under the sponsorship of the Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). Around 50 Delegates from more than 20 Customs administrations in the AP region attended the Workshop and discussed topics related to the WTO TFA. Mr. Noriakazu Kuramoto, Head, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager, Ms. Jate-arpa Benjaphong, Program Coordinator, and Ms. Pattarapak Nopnakeepong, Program Coordinator of the ROCB A/P, also attended the Workshop to support the facilitation of the Workshop.

Mr. Pranab Kumar Das, the WCO Director, Compliance and Facilitation, opened the Workshop and warmly welcomed the participants and observers. In his opening remarks, Mr. Das highlighted the importance of discussing and monitoring the implementation of the WTO TFA at a national level as well as learning from the challenges we are facing today. He noted this is also the year that the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee conducts a review of progress made in implementing the WTO TFA. He further mentioned that the WCO is dedicated to unite the efforts of Member Customs Administrations through the pandemic. He concluded his remarks by

encouraging participants to actively share experiences on how we can overcome these challenges.

Mr. Kuramoto also delivered the opening remarks. He conveyed his sincere appreciation to the WCO for organizing this Workshop and to the Japan Customs for financial support to the implementation of the WTO TFA. He emphasized that the Mercator program developed by the WCO has supported Members' effort on the implementation of the WTO TFA. He also mentioned that Customs Administrations again recognize the importance of the implementation of the TFA from the perspective of disaster countermeasures. He concluded by giving his best regards for successful workshop.

Mr. Hidetoshi Aramaki, Director for International Technical Cooperation, Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance, expressed his gratitude to the WCO and ROCB A/P for organizing this workshop and comprehensive agenda. He underlined the importance of trade facilitation especially amid the pandemic. He reiterated that WCO instruments and tools such as the WCO Guidelines on disaster management and supply chain continuity to fight against COVID-19 are important for Members to ensure supply chain facilitation. He also expressed his best wishes for fruitful discussions during the 3 day workshop.

During the Workshop, the participants actively shared experiences on the implementation of the WTO TFA including measures for facilitating the movement of essential goods in the pandemic, Role of technologies, Cooperation with the private sector, Coordinated Border Management, National Committees on Trade Facilitation, Mercator Maturity Model and WCO Time Release Study. Mercator Program Advisors (MPAs) in the AP region also contributed to this workshop by facilitating discussions and introducing the WCO instruments and tools. Ms. Mamiya updated the capacity building activities in the AP region by highlighting the ROCB A/P's response to the COVID-19 by assisting in organizing virtual workshops and meetings, enriching the publication to enhance communication and information sharing even during the pandemic.

The Workshop was an excellent occasion for exchanging their experience and best practices on the implementation of the WTO TFA and discussing the way forward. The participants expressed their appreciation to CCF/Japan, the WCO, MPAs, the ROCB A/P and the presenters.

WCO Free Zone Virtual Workshop for Asia/Pacific Region

26-28 April 2021, Online Workshop



The WCO Free Zone Virtual Workshop for Asia/Pacific Region was held from 26 to 28 April 2021. The Workshop was organized by WCO under the sponsorship of the China Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/China) and hosted by ROCB A/P. Together with the experts on Free Zone from the WCO, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P, Ms. Zhengqing Ye, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, Ms. Pavida Boonmun, Assistant Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, Ms. Vareemon Chairungsriert, Program Coordinator, and Ms. Jate-arpa Benjaphong, Program Coordinator of the ROCB A/P, also joined as facilitators/coordinators for the Workshop.

The workshop was attended by more than 50 participants from 19 AP Member administrations as well as representatives from the private sector and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Workshop provided an excellent opportunity for participants to present their national administrations' experiences of free zones (FZs) and to discuss good practices and the challenges that they are facing.

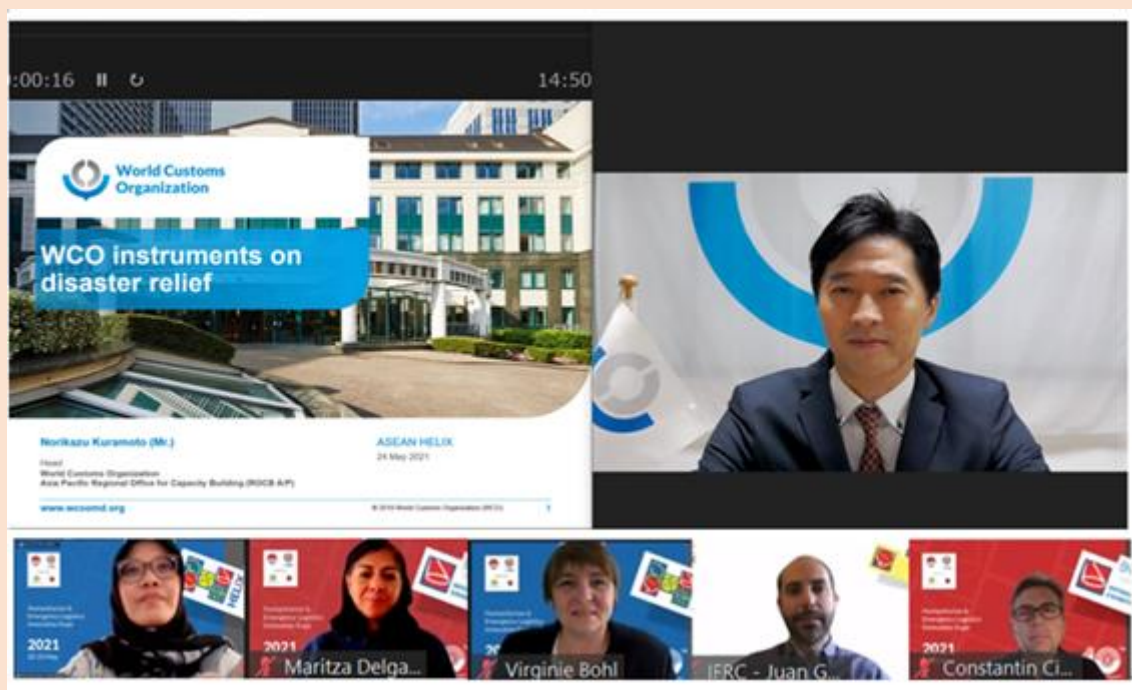
Topics discussed during the Workshop included the current situation of FZs, Customs' roles in FZs, cooperation between authorities and the private sector and emerging challenges in FZs. Participants emphasized the expansion of FZs had been seen as a policy tool for economic development. However, incentives such as tax benefits and relaxed regulations attracted

legitimate trade, they are also often susceptible to exploitation for illicit purposes. In session 9, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager of ROCB A/P moderated the discussion on the enhancing cooperation in FZs and underscored the importance of establishing strong partnerships with business, including through the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) concept, of receiving advance information from traders, and of using modern technologies to mitigate risks while facilitating legal trade flows.

With an objective of sharing experiences and gathering input on preventing illicit trade in FZs, the Workshop was very well received by participants and raised a lot of interest and heated discussion. The participants expressed their appreciation to the WCO, the ROCB A/P and the Experts for their great support of the workshop.

ROCB A/P promotes WCO Instruments on Disaster Relief at the ASEAN Logistics EXPO

24 May 2021, Online, Bangkok



At the invitation of the Humanitarian and Emergency Logistics Innovation Expo (HELIX), Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P delivered the presentation about WCO instruments on disaster relief on behalf of the WCO.

At the event, Mr. Kuramoto made a presentation on WCO instruments related to disaster relief namely known as the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and Istanbul Convention. He explained in detail the Specific Annex J of Chapter 5 of RKC and Annex B-9 of Istanbul Convention as specific articles related to disaster relief.

The Humanitarian and Emergency Logistics Innovation Expo (HELIX) is an initiative of the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Center) to capture the latest advancements and innovation in humanitarian logistics and supply chain management. It aims to provide ASEAN's National Disaster Management Organizations a menu of solutions to address gaps in logistics and capacity.

ROCB A/P celebrate opening new RDTC Korea

8 June 2021, Incheon, Korea

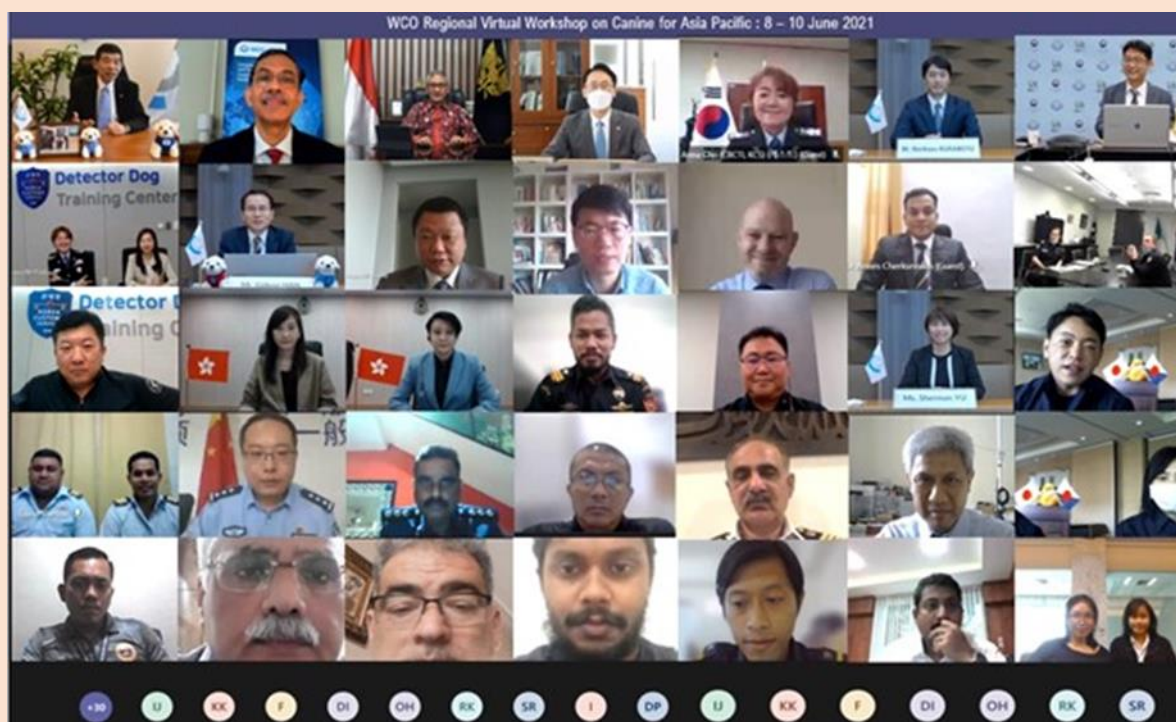


At the invitation of the Director-General of RDTC Korea, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P and his colleagues attended the Virtual Launching Ceremony of Regional Dog Training Center (RDTC) Korea. Mr. Kuramoto conveyed his warmest congratulations to Ms. Anna Cho, Director-General of RDTC Korea.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Ms. Anna Cho, Director-General of RDTC Korea, declared the official Opening of RDTC Korea, followed by cake cutting with her colleagues. At this occasion, Mr. Jaehyeon Lim, Commissioner of KCS, expressed a sincere welcome and thanks for the ceremony and launching of WCO RDTC Korea. He strengthened the importance of building international networks among detector dog operating authorities for swift sharing of information including canine training techniques and the latest detection trends. As a congratulatory remark, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of WCO, mentioned RDTC Korea will be the regional Hub in the AP region supported by a good network of 16 RDTCs worldwide. Mr. Askolani, Vice-chair of WCO AP, highlighted the importance of minimal disruption in the detection of illegal goods by canines. So, he appreciated the RDTC Korea efforts in sharing best practices, profiling canine knowledges in AP region.

The WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Virtual Workshop on Canines

8-10 June 2021, Online workshop hosted by ROCB A/P



The WCO Asia/Pacific regional Virtual Workshop on Canines was held from 8 June to 10 June 2021. The Workshop was hosted by the ROCB A/P in close cooperation with the WCO under the sponsorship of the Korea Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Korea). The 21 Customs administrations in the Asia and Pacific region attended the Workshop. Together with the canine experts from the WCO and Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P, Mr. Gideon Ilkwon HAN, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, and Ms. Sherman YU, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P also attended as facilitators/coordinators for the Workshop.

In order to enhance Members' capacities in the area of canine enforcement to combat the smuggling of dangerous and contraband items and to serve as an effective regional platform to share best practices and define common challenges, the Workshop covered the WCO fentanyl project and experiences from AP members. Through a series of presentations and discussions, the participants learnt that canine capability is an effective and efficient tool to tackle illegal goods with minimal disruption, such as drugs, cash, wildlife product etc.

During the workshop, experiences from 8 AP members, namely Hong Kong China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, India, Australia, Maldives and Pakistan were shared through the country presentations. The participants actively engaged in discussions of each expert led session, including breed and operation scheme benchmarks. Also, the participants exchanged their experiences to address the challenges on how to implement detector dog activity in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The active contribution of participants resulted in a successful workshop and this workshop supported enhancing communication and information sharing among Member administrations even in the pandemic. The participants expressed their appreciation to the Korea Customs Service, the WCO, the ROCB A/P and the Experts for their support of the workshop.

ROCB A/P attended the 10th ASEAN World Customs Organization (WCO) Consultation at the 13th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors- General of Customs
10 June 2021, online, Bangkok Thailand



At the invitation of the ASEAN Secretariat, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P attended the 10th ASEAN – World Customs Organization (WCO) Consultation at the 13th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors- General of Customs virtually held on 10 June 2021 in Bangkok, Thailand. Ms. Sherman YU, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P also attended.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Rey Leonardo B Guerrero, Commissioner of Philippines Customs and by Indonesia Customs, WCO Vice-Chair for the Asia/Pacific region, with the attendance of Mr. Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General of the ASEAN Economic Community.

In the opening remarks, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, the Secretary General of WCO briefly explained the work done and the way forward of WCO in pandemic times, particularly the vaccination program and its facilitation. Echoing the SG's themes, the RDM of WCO presented these WCO hot topics to the participants. This meeting provided a platform to exchange views on

international and emerging customs issues. The WCO also took the opportunity to explain the most current developments, priority programs and the strategic direction.

During the meeting, important issues such as recovery in ASEAN countries after the opening up of border in post-pandemic, digitalization in trade, data exchange in Single Window adopted were highlighted in the discussion. Mr. Kuramoto introduced the capacity building activities of ROCB AP as well as the forthcoming plan to the participants.

ROCB A/P appreciate New Zealand Customs

June 15, 2021, Bangkok Thailand



Mr. Daniel Brunt, Customs Attaché, the New Zealand Embassy in Bangkok as a cooperate partner of ROCB A/P paid courtesy visit to Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, the Head of the ROCB A/P accompanied by his successor Mr. David Radovanovich on June 15 2021.

Mr. Kuramoto welcomed them and expressed his gratitude for the great help provided by Mr. Brunt to ROCB A/P in the past three years at the end of his term and his return to New Zealand Customs. At the same time, He expressed warmest welcome to Mr. Radovanovich to ROCB A/P family and look forward to forthcoming collaboration.

Mr. Radovanovich introduced his role as a Technical Attaché in Bangkok and emphasized the importance of the efforts to assist the Members to build capacity in the AP region. He also

expressed his commitment to the supporting ROCB A/P.

Taking this opportunity, Mr. Kuramoto introduced all the ROCB A/P members and asked Mr. Radovanovich to have good relationship with us. He outlined the major current initiatives of the World Customs Organization (WCO), including its main missions and tools/instruments as well as the COVID-19 response followed by the introduction on ROCB A/P and the upcoming events in the next fiscal year.

In addition to that, Mr. Kuramoto expressed his deepest appreciation to the New Zealand Customs for its great contribution made for the ROCB A/P activities and the E-Newsletter and looked forward to closer cooperation in the future.

Japan Customs Friends in Bangkok visit to the ROCB A/P

21 June 2021, Bangkok, Thailand



Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, the Head of the ROCB A/P received the courtesy visit of Japan Customs friends in Bangkok, namely Mr. Tetsuro Higuchi, Customs Attaché, the Embassy of Japan in Bangkok accompanied by Mr. Rei Murakawa, his successor as well as Mr. Akihiko Fukuzono, JICA Expert stationed at Thai Customs Department on June 21 2021.

Mr. Kuramoto welcomed them and appreciated Japan Customs for its continuous support for the regional capacity building programs of WCO. He also thanked Mr. Higuchi and Mr.

Fukuzono, who returned to Japan at the completion of their term for the wonderful relationship with ROCB A/P during their stay. At the same time, he is very pleased to welcome Mr. Murakawa as a new Customs Attaché from the Embassy of Japan.

Mr. Murakawa introduced his past working experience in Japan Customs and expressed his commitment to supporting ROCB A/P. He emphasized that this visit offered a great opportunity to exchange information on Customs-related capacity building activities, as well as explore synergies of future co-operation.

Taking this opportunity, Mr. Kuramoto introduced all the ROCB A/P members and asked Mr. Murakawa to keep a regular working contact with us. Then Mr. Kuramoto explained the major current initiatives of the WCO followed by the introduction on the ROCB A/P and the upcoming events in the next fiscal year.

Both parties found this visit to be a good and motivating basis for the continuing co-operation between the ROCB A/P and the Japan Customs.

ROCB A/P attended the bilateral meeting with US-ASEAN Business Council

22 June 2021, Bangkok, Thailand

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a presentation slide titled "1. COVID-19 response" with the WCO logo in the top right corner. The slide content includes:

- Secretariat efforts on vaccine supply**
 - Guidance documents to communicate
 - Member best practice
 - HS Classification List for COVID-19 Vaccine & Medical supplies
 - Webinar on WHO approval vaccines
- WCO COVID-19 Project**
 - Workshops
 - Leaflet and E-Newsletter
- Operation STOP2**
 - Fake COVID-19 vaccine and its medical supplies

The slide also features three images: a box of vaccines, a man in a suit pointing at a world map, and a "STOP" sign next to vaccine vials. On the right side of the Zoom window, a vertical list of participants is visible, including:

- ROCB AP Norikazu...
- ROCB AP Sher...
- USABC Marcella...
- Dow Toan Nguy...
- Nike Azlina Su...

At the bottom of the Zoom window, there are icons for audio, video, chat, and other controls, along with a red "離開" (Leave) button.

At the invitation of the of US-ASEAN Business Council, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, the Head of the ROCB A/P participated a bilateral meeting held virtually on 22 June 2021. Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, Ms. Sherman Yu also joined the meeting to provide support.

The meeting was opened with remarks delivered by Senior Vice President and Regional Managing Director, Ambassador Michael W. Michalak. In his speech, he highlighted several issues, e.g. facilitation of vaccine, digitalization of Customs clearance, e-commerce, capacity building and the contribution of private sector which are vital for the recovery from the pandemic in the globe.

Following Amb. Michalak's speech, Mr. Norikazu delivered a presentation to introduce the work of the ROCB A/P and provide an overview of the upcoming capacity building activities for participants. He also shared with them how the ROCB A/P is overcoming challenges due to the COVID-19.

During the meeting, participants expressed their interest in collaborating with ROCB AP as well as WCO in terms of knowledge sharing in future capacity building activities. Mr. Norikazu took note of their suggestions and looking forward to explore the feasibility of cooperation in future.

Dr. Mikuriya Secretary General promote SIEs Initiative with UN Ambassadors

29 June 2021, Bangkok Thailand by online



At the invitation of Fiji's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), HE Mr. Satyendra Prasad, leading the UN Pacific Group, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General have the briefing meeting of WCO Small Island Economies (SIEs) Initiative with 16 Ambassadors and Representatives to the UN of Small Island States from the Pacific region and Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, the Head of the ROCB A/P attend the meeting held on 28 June 2021.

Dr. Mikuriya emphasized that WCO's SIEs Initiative supporting tools further connect SIEs to the international supply chain with WCO instruments and tools, because of this, WCO decided to extend the WCO's Master Trainer Program (MTP), funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to the Pacific region. He also highlighted the benefits of WCO membership, especially as its members could receive technical assistance through various WCO capacity building programs, which is expected above the annual membership fee.

Ambassadors of WCO Members showed an interest in maximizing the advantages of being part of the WCO network as well as the WCO's MTP for Pacific region, while Ambassadors of non-WCO Members expressed their interest in WCO membership, with the benefits far exceeding the annual membership costs. They agreed that these economies would gain the most from WCO programs, given their need for enhanced connectivity.

The meeting was coordinated by the UN Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), under the leadership of the UN Under-Secretary General, Ms. Fekita K.'Utoikamanu.

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P)

Address: 1, Thai Customs Department, G Floor of 120 Years Building,

Sunthornkosa Rd., Khlongtoey, Bangkok 10110 Thailand

Telephone: +66-2-667-6777

E-mail: rocb@rocbap.org

website: <http://www.rocb-ap.org>

Mr. Norikazu KURAMOTO, Head, WCO ROCB A/P

Ms. Yuko MAMIYA

Ms. Sherman YU

Ms. Grace YE

Mr. Ilkwon HAN

Ms. Pavida BOONMUN

Ms. Jate-Arpa BENJAPHONG

Ms. Vareemon CHAIRUNGSRILERT

Ms. Pattarapak NOPNAKEEPONG

Regular Supporters: Mr. David RADOVANOVICH and Mr. Wayne MORAN

