



E - Newsletter No.77

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FOREWORD



Dear Readers,

Greetings from Bangkok ROCB A/P.

With the successful conclusion of the WCO Council Sessions in Brussels in June 2022, the WCO's FY2021/22 has come to the end. I believe this year that WCO headquarters and its members have focused on overcoming the difficulties of COVID-19 and on the resilience of our functions.

In the implementation of capacity building, which is the main activity of ROCB A/P, it was also a year of focus and continued delivery. At the same time, we have strengthened our collaboration with Vice Chair, RILO A/P, and regional entities in delivering capacity-building activities online. From last April, we resumed delivery of hybrid and in-person workshops, taking into account COVID-19 travel restrictions in the Asia Pacific region.

A new fiscal year for the WCO just began in July 2022. During this fiscal year, we will continue to conduct meetings in a more ordinary style to strengthen relationships with stakeholders, and deliver as many workshops as possible to our members. I sincerely hope that many Asia Pacific Members will join us.

The latest E-Newsletter, No 77, features activities undertaken with Asia-Pacific members in the fourth quarter of WCO Fiscal Year 2021/22 (April through June 2022). In this E-Newsletter, we present ROCB A/P's special essays, which explain WCO tools and current hot topics in a user-friendly and easy-to-understand manner. There are three special essays written by Program Managers of ROCB A/P, namely:

- 1) An Introduction of the ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Exemplifying Follow-up Actions After the WCO Regional Workshops in FY 2020/2021 by Ms. Grace YE,
- 2) RCL Heads meeting path way for setting a new cooperative framework in Asia Pacific region by Ms. Sherman YU, and
- 3) What I learned from Knowledge Academy by Ms. Pavida Tarapoom.

We sincerely hope you enjoy ROCB A/P's special essays and use them as reference material for policy officials and field officers.

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,



Norikazu Kuramoto (Mr.)

Head of the ROCB A/P

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An Introduction of the ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Exemplifying Follow-up Actions After the WCO Regional Workshops in FY 2020/2021



Ms. Grace YE

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

Introduction

Recently, we have been witnessed the gradual recovery from the pandemic globally and ROCB A/P's daily operations have returned to normal.

Looking back the last fiscal year, ROCB A/P has remained a leading capacity building office dedicated to implementing regional/sub-regional/national workshops to support our members become more confident to address the common challenges, whilst also adapting smoothly to the 'New Normal'.

At the same time, our office continues to encourage participants to maximize benefits and knowledge obtained through workshops to support the sustainable development of their home administrations. That is why ROCB A/P has attached great importance to post workshop follow-up actions. In this regard, the Follow-Up Actions Survey 2021 aims to take a snapshot of the impact that the capacity building programs have on the performance of regional Member administrations, in terms of work efficiency and effectiveness as well as organizational development. It is also expected that the Survey will remind workshop participants of their role expectations and encourage them to utilize the skills and knowledge acquired, wherever possible

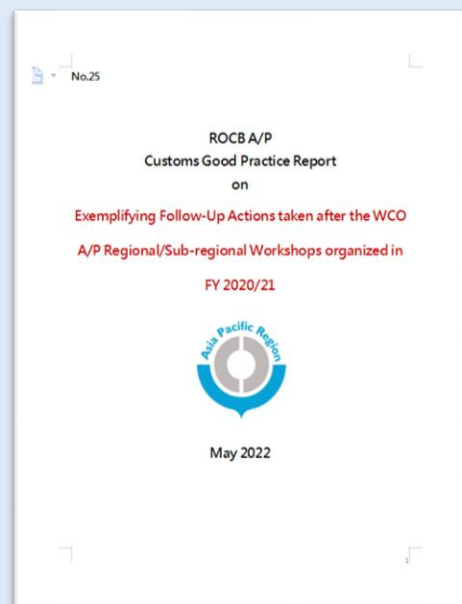
after the respective regional/sub-regional capacity building programs.

In my essay, I would like to share the findings of Follow-up Actions Survey of last FY 2020/21.

The Follow-Up Actions Survey 2021

In the FY 2020/21 (July 2020 – June 2021), the ROCB A/P organized a total of 11 regional/sub-regional workshops, 9 of which were subject to the seventh round of the “Survey on the Follow-up Actions taken after the Participation in the WCO Regional Workshop” this was conducted 6 months after the workshops (hereinafter referred to as the Survey 2021”). The total number of WS was double that of the previous FY year. All these WSs were conducted online due to the ‘New Normal’ situation.

The total no. of replies to the Survey 2021 was 58. The rate of overall reply decreased to 38% (70% in 2020). However, the rate of reply received from the participants of sub-regional workshops was around 92%. It is a clear indication of strong commitment by the sub-regional members and a recognized result of the capacity building effort in addressing sub-regional issues.



Members' Major Follow-up Actions

The Survey 2021 reveals that the most common follow-up actions are sharing/circulation of training materials with colleagues (48%), submission of reports to superiors (25%) and making recommendations to their senior officials for consideration (25%). The result is similar to last year's survey with these actions being the top three most common follow-up options for participants.

Specific Actions	No. of reply
✓ Shared training materials with colleagues	48
✓ Submitted reports	25
✓ Made recommendations	25
✓ Organized in-house workshops	14
✓ Developed operational manuals	8
✓ Others	11

Referring to the Survey, it is appreciated that participants did not keep knowledge and skills to themselves and were more willing to share with coworkers. It is an easy step that the ROCB A/P strongly recommends. Moreover, reporting to the person who selected them and their supervisors on what they learned, contributed to sharing the value of the workshop. We also strongly encouraged participants to make recommendations if they noticed anything to improve or enhance their organization's systems.

Direct effects obtained from the WCO workshops

Workshop participants observed a series of direct effects in the wake of the follow-up actions taken in their home administrations.

62% of respondents who observed direct effects after workshop participation agreed applying the lessons learnt at the managerial and operational levels brought about positive effects, while another 38% observed no direct impact for the time being or yet to realize, especially for those strategic projects carried out at the border.

Improvement in work efficiency and effectiveness



With the goal of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations, the WCO attaches provided guidance and support to build Member capacity to achieve their national development goals. Particularly in the areas of trade facilitation, revenue collection, community protection and national security. In the Survey 2021,

respondents were asked whether the WCO workshops had contributed to improve work efficiency and effectiveness in their home administrations. Among the 58 replies to this question, 98% agreed the lessons learnt from the workshops had contributed to positive advancement in their work.

Initiation of new reform and modernization projects

The last question of the questionnaire is the initiation of new modernization projects. The capacity building programs organized by the WCO are not only aiming to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs performance, but also provide Members with abundant food-for-thought for the development of reform and modernization initiatives. In this context, the ROCB A/P does not have an exclusive definition of “modernization projects” for Members. These projects can be an institutional engagement work towards future enhancement of the current systems or programs with short/mid-term projections. Among 58 of respondents, 50% were enlightened by the fruitful content of the WCO workshops or the good practices shared by other Members, leading to the initiation of new projects in their home administrations.

My observation

Regarding the findings of Survey 2021, the ROCB A/P observed that overall replies have decreased from 70% in 2020 to 38% in 2021. However, we are glad to see that the rate of reply received from the participants of sub-regional workshops is around 92%. It seems that the topics and program content were a good match for the needs and interests of the sub-regional members.

They had strong interest in the topics as well as information provided, this resulted in the active participation of our Survey.

For the regional Ws, the reply number is not that satisfactory. It is extremely difficult to find exact reasons, but I would imagine one of the major reasons are the limitations of online training. Participants may have found it difficult to connect with the lecturers as well as other participants. Another reason is that some workshops' topics and focus were not in the common interest of all members. After 6 months, it seems to be tough for them to recall what they have learnt at the workshops and there was no enthusiasm for them to join our Survey.

At the same time, I can confirm that the workshops were still able to contribute to the improvement of members' institutions. We have noticed that most workshop participants shared information and learning back home, submitted the report to their supervisors and organized in-house training. It also reveals the WCO workshops did inspire the Member Administrations to initiate the new projects as well as improved efficiency of Members' work as well as organizational development.

Lastly, the participants' overall opinion of the online workshop was that it should be used as a supplementary scheme. Members emphasized virtual workshops were the only option for them to exchange views on the focus areas of the region, even if facing connectivity problems and poorer communication opportunities compared with ordinary face to face workshops. They also highlighted the importance of such online workshops in contributing to enhance collaboration to overcome the negative effects caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Conclusion

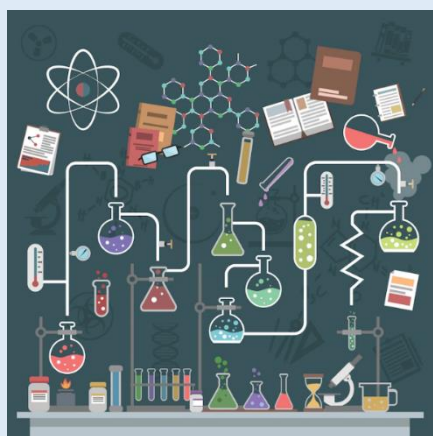
In any case, there is no change in the importance to maximize the benefits of the workshops and also the participants' efforts, bring more benefit to their home administrations. The ROCB A/P would like to continue to encourage participants to take post workshop action. In the next FY, the ROCB A/P is getting ready to organize face-to-face/hybrid activities with our commitment to encourage Member representatives in the WCO workshops to optimize the value of the regional capacity building programs in their organizations. Our office will continue to conduct our Survey to evaluate progress and further identify technical assistance needs of Member administrations. For more details of the Survey 2021, please visit our [website](#).

RCL heads meeting path way for setting a new cooperative framework in Asia Pacific region



Ms. Sherman YU
Program Manager

Customs Laboratory and Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL)



Generally speaking, Customs laboratories across the world bear two pivotal roles for Customs.

First one is determining tariff classification and the level of duties and other taxes by analyzing import/export goods. They produce analysis and reports that give the Customs authority proper reference in determining appropriate revenue collection.

The second one is, in response to the dynamic and rapid changes in society and Customs' environment, Customs laboratories are required to shoulder more responsibilities in the area of environmental protection, fight against fraud and terrorism, IPR protection and drug enforcement by exercising their professionalism in items' analysis as well as classification. Furthermore, increasing globalization of the world economy requires Customs laboratories to conduct their analyses rapidly and accurately with higher transparency and predictability in Customs procedures.

Through the WCO's regionalization approach, Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) has been authorized by WCO to promote cooperation among Customs Laboratories in the region. Since RCLs primarily support capacity building activities, the ROCB A/P works closely and cooperates with them. As of July 2022, Asia Pacific region has 5 RCLs and they are located in China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

Established a new framework in AP region

The ROCB AP has proposed a new cooperation framework to provide RCLs with the related information on capacity building and to generate further synergies and mutual cooperation among RCLs. As agreed in 22nd Regional Heads of Customs Administration (RHCA)



in April 2021, the ROCB A/P, which is the coordinator of capacity building activities and advocator of liaison work in the region adopted a new initiative to foster closer cooperation within regional entities.

1st RCL heads meeting held by online

That said, the ROCB A/P hosted and organized the 1st Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory¹ (hereafter referred as 1st RCL Heads Meeting) on 10 May 2022. Due to Covid and related travel restrictions, the meeting was conveyed online. The objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- I. To share the updates and development of WCO, Vice Chair, RILO A/P and ROCB A/P;
- II. To share the related Customs Laboratory information namely, HS2022, Customs Laboratory Guide, RCL attachment program and illicit drug smuggling trend;
- III. To provide a platform for information exchange and sharing of best practices among RCLs.

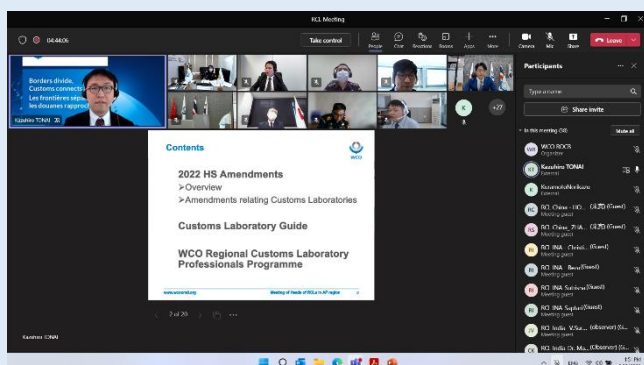
10 May 2022, Online Meeting Hosted by ROCB A/P



Head of ROCB A/P to make welcoming remarks. I, Sherman Yu as Program Manager was very honored to be the MC of this meeting.

During the meeting, WCO, Vice Chair, RILO A/P and ROCB A/P provided its updates and recent developments to RCLs. In addition to that, we shared and exchanged views on the matters below.

✧ 2022 HS Amendments

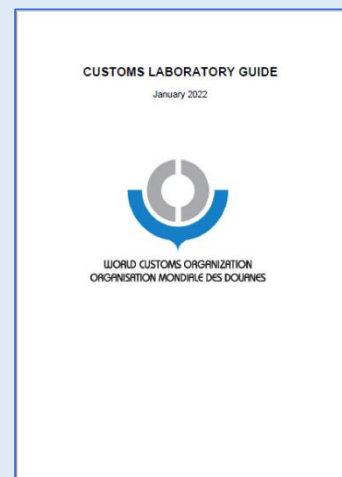


A presentation on the highlights of HS 2022 by Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate of WCO was encompassed in the meeting. The Recommendations in HS 2022 include 351 sets of accepted amendments.

The presenter pinpointed some new headings and subheadings relating to foodstuffs and chemicals that are related to Customs Laboratories (e.g. olive oil) as well as drugs and drug derivatives. Also, to facilitate the classification and cross-border transportation of priority medical goods, a new heading was generated to cover all types of diagnostic test kits.

✧ WCO Customs Laboratory Guide (CLG)

A WCO representative went on to give a quick overview on the Customs Laboratory Guide (CLG) as a reference for Customs Administrations. The CLG is primarily meant to be a practical handbook for the establishment or improvement of Customs laboratories in developing countries. The Guide includes "best practices" and covers a variety of laboratory operations. It is hoped that the reader can apply those practical ideas to his or her own laboratory according to the needs of and the resources provided by their Administration.



✧ WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme

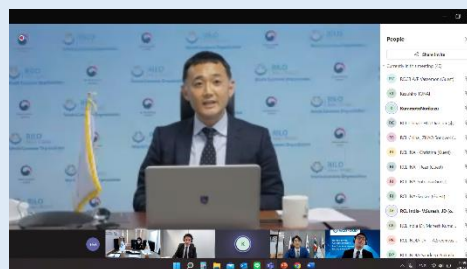
A WCO presenter presented the most attractive programme for analysts at a Customs Laboratory. The goal of this programme is to provide comprehensive training and hands-on experience of working in Customs Laboratory as a professional officer. The WCO will organize a 'WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme' in 2022 for the first time in three years. This programme is designed for laboratory analysts who are or will be working in Customs laboratories. Participants will gain practical experience at the RCL in Japan or Korea. Also, they will gain knowledge about the latest information of HS relating Customs Laboratory at WCO. The first part, which will be classroom training, will be held at the WCO from 17 to 21 October 2022. After that, the participants will be divided into two teams to receive a six-week training at the RCL either in Japan or Korea from 24 October to 1 December 2022.



Source: The Central Customs Laboratory (CCL), Ministry of Finance, Japan

✧ **Illegal Drug trend and overview**

Since laboratories are responsible for the ruling of types of illegal drugs seized by Customs, it is very important to understand the trends in the detection of illegal drugs.



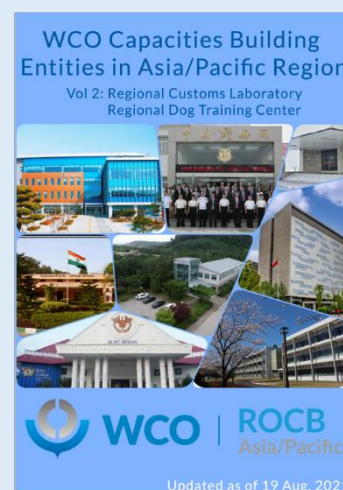
Based on the CEN data in 2021, RILO A/P summarized the statistics and gave a general picture of drug smuggling trends. Among all the drugs types including psychotropic substances, methamphetamine ranked top in seizures. As impacted by Covid, the popular smuggling modes were both air cargo and mail. In addition, information was provided and discussions had on alleged routes, case statistics and the emergence of new chemical substances such as a fentanyl.



✧ **ROCB A/P: Overview of capacity building activities and future plan**

Customs modernization through capacity building is an effective tool for members and a comprehensive approach to improving customs enforcement capability.

Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P took the opportunity to present the capacity building activities carried out in fiscal year 2021/2022 and explain the work plan in 2022/2023. In addition, he elaborated on cooperation with different regional entities in 2021/2022 was to have meetings with them or participate in their workshops or conferences. He also promoted the publication from ROCB A/P, especially the Brochure of Regional Entities Vol.2 that focused on Customs Laboratories and welcomed members to join the capacity building activities that are organized by our office.



✧ RCLs' introduction and presentation

During the 1st RCL Heads meeting, each RLC was invited to give a presentation to introduce their facilities & set up as well as latest developments. Participants shared general information, for example their history, organization and structure as well as its views on the challenges and experience in operating the Laboratory. This meeting provided a good platform for members to understand each other, to share best practice and to foster closer cooperation in future.



Way forward

All RCLs and participants agreed that RCL Heads meeting can lay a solid foundation for future cooperation and confirmed that this meeting should be organized annually. Regarding the venue for next RCL heads meeting, RCL Japan offered to host the meeting in 2023. Subject to Covid restrictions, meeting mode would be face-to-face meeting instead of online.



The ROCB A/P will continue to support the work of WCO and acting as a bridge between the AP members and the WCO, by promoting tools, conventions, instruments and hot topics of the WCO to members.

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

What I learned from Knowledge Academy



Ms. Pavida Tarapoom
Assistant Program Manager

Introduction

Being under the global COVID-19 pandemic for more than two years, human activities and daily routines have dramatically changed and online activities play an important role in our lives. It is obvious that virtual interactions around the world have seen gigantic growth compared to regular face-to-face communication allowing people to connect at distance in response to *New Normal*. In this regard, it is critical that Customs administrations continue to facilitate the seamless flow of goods, especially relief goods, to help mitigate the overall impact of the pandemic.



To continue to assist its members and partners, the World Customs Organization (WCO) organized the 2022 edition of the Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade (KACT), bringing together experts in Customs matters to meet the demands of a complex international and cross-border trading system.

“A 4-day academy focusing on the development of technical skills for Customs and Trade practitioners”

WCO Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade webinar focuses on the development of technical skills for Customs and trade practitioners. It is organized once a year in Brussels and led by widely respected technical experts in their various fields and includes instructors from private sector companies, government institutions, and academia. However, due to the pandemic, the 12th edition of the WCO Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade was held virtually from 28th June to 1st July 2022, in English and French. Over 3000 participants took part in the four-day intensive training course for Customs and trade professionals.

The WCO launched the first edition of the Knowledge Academy in 2011 and, over the years, interest in this event has grown among the public and private sectors, resulting in very positive feedback from attendees.

The primary objective of the WCO Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade is to provide intense training for Customs and Business practitioners. Business professionals, Customs managers and administrators, border agency officials, international organization representatives and academia all benefit from the intensive interactive discussions on the most pertinent topics in the Customs environment today.

Course Outline

The program was tailor made to the needs of Academy participants and was split into two learning tracks per day facilitated by more than 20 prominent speakers, trainers and facilitators with different profiles and backgrounds. In this regard, participants could choose to participate in the track that they are interested in or familiar with. However, the program did not allow them to participate in two tracks in interested in parallel.

Key areas of the WCO's work were covered, namely:

- WCO Data Strategy
- WCO Mercator Program: Supporting the implementation of the WTO FTA
- Valuation
- Gender Equality and Diversity
- Performance Measurement
- AEO Virtual Validations
- Single Window
- E-Commerce
- WCO Data Model
- IPR in times of COVID
- Green Customs/ Circular Economy
- Project COVID
- The Harmonized System
- HS 2022
- Rules of Origin
- HS-General Rules of Interpretation
- Recent Classification decisions taken by HSC

What I learned from Knowledge Academy

I participated in the four-day webinar as a participant and gained a lot of knowledge and experience from it. As I mentioned participants were able to choose tracks each day, I chose learning tracks based on my interest and experience, these I can divide into the following groups.

1. Learning tracks based on my interest
2. Learning tracks based on my working experience
3. Learning tracks related to hot topics

As I am a Customs technical officer of more than thirteen years, I have gained much experience related to customs issues. However, I still need to learn more and to brush-up, my knowledge at all times. So, I chose to participate in, Performance Measurement, AEO Virtual Validations, Single Window, E-Commerce, and WCO Data Model. I found that all speakers could give a clear picture including topic background and important updated information.

In addition, over the past year, I especially have shown interest in Gender Equality and Green Customs and consistently joined events related to those topics to gain more knowledge and exchange points of views with others. So, I took this opportunity to choose those two tracks to emphasize my knowledge and in the hope that I will have a chance to share knowledge which I gained from the webinar to others who have the same interest.

Lastly, I choose to learn IPR in the time of COVID including Project COVID as they are recent hot topics in WCO and globally which, as a Customs officer, I need to keep across and learn how to facilitate trade and protect citizens at the same time under the situation of the pandemic.

Event's Website with ppt materials download service

Although participants could not join two tracks of learning in parallel, the event's website was available for learners to learn as much as possible, by providing power point presentations of all tracks to download.

The website not only introduces the courses, the agenda but it also introduces all speakers and their expertise. All participants can visit the website in advance to gain information of the course and to get to know their speakers.

Way Forward

Joining the webinar as a mid-level customs officer, I increased my understanding and Customs knowledge with international perspectives. I strongly believe that the WCO Knowledge Academy is useful for the education in essential Customs knowledge and it could benefit ROCB A/P Members in the future.

To enhance capacity of officers in Customs administrations, ROCB A/P encourages and supports all Members to join the WCO Knowledge Academy, which is organized yearly. We are ready to dedicate our support to Members in order to maintain the ability of Customs community to protect society and facilitate trade at the same time effectively.

For more information, please contact me at maypavida@rocbap.org

Workshops and Meetings

Pacific Islands' Members sharpened their expertise and training skills with the aim of becoming the quality trainers

25 – 29 April 2022, Suva, Fiji



The second WCO/JICA Joint Sub-Regional Working Group Activity for Master Trainer Programme (MTP) on Customs Valuation and HS Classification for the Pacific Islands was held from 25 to 29 April 2022 in Suva, Fiji. The Working Group Activity was organized by the WCO and JICA with the support of ROCB A/P as well as in cooperation with the Fiji Revenue & Customs Service. A total of 20 participants representing six WCO Members in the Pacific region, namely Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu as well as the Acting Head of Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) Secretariat attended the Working Group Activity in person or virtually. Together with experts on Customs Valuation and HS Classification from the WCO and Japan Customs, Mr. Noriakazu Kuramoto, Head, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, also attended to assist in organizing the Working Group Activity.

Mr. Kuramoto delivered opening remarks during the opening ceremony. In his remarks, Mr. Kuramoto expressed his sincere appreciation to all stakeholders for their efforts in holding this activity and encouraged participants to contribute to the discussion. Ms. Yuko Mamiya provided technical support for the Activity in a hybrid format and served as a master of ceremonies in the HS session. In the course of the Working Group Activity, the participants sharpened their training skills as well as expertise in Customs Valuation and HS Classification, all necessary to conduct training as quality trainers. At the end of this Working Group Activity, participants reviewed and updated their work plans and demonstrated their strong commitment to their work plans in order to achieve the objectives of the MTP through the progressive follow-up activities.

Participants' active contribution resulted in the successful Working Group Activity and this Activity strengthened the cooperation between the WCO, JICA, experts, participants and ROCB A/P. The participants expressed their appreciation to the WCO, JICA, Japan Customs, experts and the ROCB A/P.

The WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Railway Hybrid Workshop

3 – 5 May 2022, Seoul Korea hosted by ROCB A/P



The WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Railway Workshop was held from 3 to 5 May 2022 in Seoul, Korea in a hybrid format allowing for remote and on-site participation. The Workshop was the first hybrid regional workshop in AP region, hosted by the ROCB A/P in close cooperation with the WCO under the sponsorship of the Korea Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Korea).

27 participants (on-site 16, online 11) from 14 Customs administrations in the Asia and Pacific region attended the Workshop. Together with Railway experts from the WCO, Mr. Ilkwon HAN, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P attended as facilitators/coordinators for the Workshop and Ms. Pavida Tarapoom (May), Assistant Program Manager also participated from the ROCB A/P. In addition, 5 international organizations (IOs), namely OTIF, UPU, CIT, CER and UIC, shared their experience related to Customs procedures for railway transportation at the workshop.

WCO started the Railway Project in 2019 to harmonize and facilitate Railway transportation with the support from CCF-Korea. The WCO Railway Guidance will be published in June 2022. Furthermore, six regional railway workshop Capacity Building activities are planned in the Asia Pacific Region starting this workshop. In this regard, this workshop is crucial to share the experience of Railway transportation between AP members.

During the workshop, 5 AP members, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Pakistan and Vietnam, shared experiences through country presentations and participants actively participated in the discussion for benchmarking and harmonization.

In addition, participants had two on-site tours at the RDTC (Regional Dog Training Center) Korea and the Express Cargo Clearance Center in Incheon Main Customs to understand the importance of canine functions and e-commerce.

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

1st Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) Heads Meeting

10 May 2022, Online Meeting Hosted by ROCB A/P

1st Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) Heads Meeting

10 May 2022, Online Meeting Hosted by ROCB A/P



The 1st Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory was organized and hosted online by ROCB A/P on 10 May 2022. About 30 participants and observers from RCLs, WCO Secretariat, Vice Chair Secretariat, and RILO A/P attended the meeting. From ROCB A/P, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head and Ms. Sherman Yu, Program Manager, and Ms. Vareemon CHAIRUNGSRILERT, Program Coordinator attended.

The meeting kicked off with an opening speech by Mr. Takashi Sato, WCO Regional Development Manager (RDM) for the A/P region followed by welcoming remarks by Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P.

At the information sharing session, updates on WCO policy, Asia Pacific regional activity and RILO A/P work were shared with participants by RDM WCO, Vice Chair Secretariat, and RILO A/P respectively. The latest HS version is now in place, the Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate of WCO presented on the highlights of HS 2022. In addition, RILO A/P shared recent trends of illicit

drug trafficking especially in the Asia Pacific region.

WCO and RILO A/P provided reference information for the two major objectives of Customs analysis: chemical analysis and illicit drug analysis. During the meeting, each RLC was invited to present and introduce their facilities & set up as well as latest developments. Participants shared views on challenges and experience in operating the RCLs. This meeting provided a good platform for members to share best practices and foster closer cooperation in future.

Mr. Kuramoto summarized the meeting content and its framework in the wrap-up and way forward session. Regarding the next RCL heads meeting, RCL Japan has offered to host the meeting hopefully in 2023. Closing remarks were delivered by Mr. Takashi Sato, RDM of WCO Capacity Building Directorate. Mr. Kuramoto also took the opportunity to thank all the participants for their participation and input in the 1st RCL Heads meeting.

ROCB AP join the WCO COVID-19 Project for Asia Pacific

11 - 13 May 2022, Online Regional Workshop hosted by WCO



The WCO Online Regional Workshop on Disaster Management and Supply Chain Continuity: Sharing Experience and Lessons Learnt from COVID-19 for the Asia Pacific was held from 11 to 13 May 2022 under the sponsorship of the government of Japan. Mr. Norikazu

Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P attended the Workshop.

The workshop kicked off with the opening remarks of Mr. Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P. In his remarks, Mr. Kuramoto underlined that Customs plays a pivotal role in business continuity under COVID-19 with WCO tools to support the nation's resilience efforts of Member administrations to ensure economic activities. In this regard, sharing good practice and experience among Asia Pacific members could be valuable and meaningful tips to address the challenges related to the disaster management and supply chain continuity. In this workshop, he also presented on resilience efforts in providing capacity building activity by ROCB A/P with WCO HQs and Asia Pacific members.

The WCO National Workshop on combating counterfeiting and piracy for General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia

16 - 18 May 2022, Phnom Penh, Cambodia



The WCO National Workshop on combating counterfeiting and piracy for the General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE) of Cambodia was held from 16 to 18 May 2022 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, under the sponsorship of the Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). The Workshop was organized by the WCO in cooperation with the ROCB A/P as

well the generous support of the GDCE of Cambodia. Together with the resource persons on IPR from the WCO Secretariat, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, also attended the workshop. 39 on-site participants from the GDCE of Cambodia benefited from the detailed and practical presentations and discussions on law and regulations, risk management, techniques of document examination and physical inspection.

In the opening ceremony, the WCO expert and the representatives of Japan Customs as well as the GDCE of Cambodia delivered the opening remarks. During the Workshop, the WCO expert introduced WCO tools that help Members effectively fight against counterfeit and pirated goods at the border as well as the outcome of Operation STOP II, which aims to combat counterfeit/illicit medicines, vaccines and medical devices related to COVID-19. Ms. Yuko Mamiya introduced the outline of the TRIPs agreement and IPR border enforcement systems in various countries. Moreover, Ms. Mamiya explained WCO tool that assists WCO Members in recognizing counterfeit and pirated goods as well as case studies of trademark infringement incidences. The representatives of right holders were invited to the workshop, and shared important information such as ways to distinguish genuine products from counterfeit ones.

During the Workshop, the participants conducted a gap analysis between their current IPR border enforcement system and international standards by using WCO self-assessment tool. They also actively discussed the challenges that the GDCE of Cambodia are facing as well as the possible measures to address these challenges. The active participation and contribution of the participants resulted in a successful workshop and this workshop supported enriching participants' knowledge as well as enhancing cooperation between Customs Administration and Rights holders. The participants expressed their appreciation to CCF/Japan, the WCO and the ROCB A/P.

ROCB A/P join AP Heads meeting in Bali

18-19 May 2022, Bali Indonesia



The WCO A/P 23rd Regional Heads of Customs Administrative Conference (RHCA) was held in hybrid format from 18 to 19 May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia hosted by the Customs and Excise of the Republic of Indonesia as Regional Vice Chair. Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P attended.

More than 60 delegates including in person participants from 18 Member administrations in Asia Pacific region and from the WCO, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General, Regional Development Manager, the RILO A/P and the ROCB A/P, as permanent observers, attended the conference.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya Secretary General congratulated the Vice Chair and participants on the face-to-face/hybrid RHCA conference first and stressed that we are in a critical phase of recovery from COVID-19 and the necessity of promoting digitalization and the utilizing of advance information to address E-Commerce in order to support supply chain resilience. He also explained

that the next Strategic Plan will focus on Digitalization, Green Customs (environment) and Governance.

Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P, updated on its capacity building activities including the response to virtual workshops as well as activities to enhance communication and information sharing among AP Members during COVID-19. Mr. Kuramoto also reported on the implementation of Focus Area 3 (Capacity Building) of the A/P RSP 2020-2022 on behalf of co-coordinators and with Japan Customs.

During the conference, Vice Chair, RILO A/P and several Member Customs shared their recent activities and developments namely Maldives, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, China, and Cambodia. In addition to that, RSP 2022-24 for the AP region was endorsed. It was agreed that Australia will take over as the next Vice Chair for Asia Pacific. Transferring the RILO A/P to Japan and the application for Regional Training Center (RTC) Thailand was also endorsed. In addition, the MOU with WCO for RTC Iran was signed and it officially became an RTC.

Asia-Pacific Members discussed the challenges and possible solutions related to the training management

24-26 May 2022, Online Workshop hosted by ROCB A/P



The WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Online Workshop on Training Management was held from 24 to 26 May 2022. The Workshop was organized by the ROCB A/P with the support of the WCO and the WCO Regional Training Centers (RTCs) in the Asia-Pacific region. Around 70 Delegates from more than 20 Customs administrations in the AP region attended the Workshop and discussed the topics related to training management. Together with the WCO Accredited Customs Expert (ACE) on Human Resource Management and Development as well as the resource person from the WCO, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P and Ms. Pavida Tarapoom, Assistant Program Manager also attended. In addition, Ms. Vareemon Chairungsrilert, Program Coordinator of the ROCB A/P, also attended the Workshop as a facilitator.

This Workshop was organized based on discussions during the 19th RTC Heads Meeting held online in October 2021. RTC Heads shared their insights on how to enhance the training capacity of AP Members in order to ensure sustainable organizational development. The idea of organizing an online workshop on training management to discuss results of the RTC Heads meeting emerged as the result of discussion.

Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P, opened the Workshop and warmly welcomed the speakers, participants and observers. In his opening remarks, Mr. Kuramoto expressed his sincere appreciation to RTCs for their kind cooperation in this Workshop. He concluded his remarks by encouraging participants to share their experiences and expertise.

During the Workshop, the participants actively shared their experience and challenges in human resource and training management including methods for implementing competency-based human resource management and training strategies as well as methods for transitioning to virtual/hybrid training. Ms. Tarapoom updated the capacity building activities in the AP region including the outcomes of the 19th RTC Heads Meeting. Ms. Mamiya explained the WCO tool concerning the Strategic Principles on Human Resource Management and the Competency-based Training Strategy. She also led a session to discuss the challenges concerning the training management from the learner's perspective.

The Workshop was an excellent occasion for exchanging their experience and best

practices on human resource and training management as well as discussing the way forward to continuously improve the training capacity of Members in the AP region. RTCs and participants agreed to cooperate with the ROCB A/P to update the Good Practice Report on Training Management as well as to organize the online workshop on Training Management periodically, the aim being to improve the training capacity of Members in the AP region. The participants expressed their appreciation to the ROCB A/P, the WCO, the WCO ACE and the presenters including RTCs.

ROCB AP gives speech at Wildlife online study seminar

27 May 2022, online organized by WWF

スライドのタイトル: UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL MARITIME SUPPLY CHAIN AND ITS LINKS TO THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

スライドの本文: This webinar addresses the needs of professionals in the shipping industry and who wish to acquire some understanding of the global maritime supply chain (freight industry, ports, intermodal shipping) and how IWT is linked to legitimate supply chains. Traffickers take advantage of operational deficiencies to exploit the passage of their goods. They misdeclare the goods, consolidate other legitimate goods, pick unusual and circuitous transit routes, and use large regional hubs that provide more options in reaching destinations. Learn how WWF and partners are introducing new tools, technologies in mitigating risks for the industry.

Organizer: WWF Asia Pacific Counter-Illegal Wildlife Trade Hub

Target Audience: Internal webinar for WWF and TR... The webinar is suitable for professionals in the shipping industry and those involved in previous maritime supply chain background.

SPECIAL GUEST: Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) of the World Customs Organization

参加者: Norikazu Kuramoto, Brian GONZALES (WWF-HK), Nelly Akhmedzhanova

At the invitation of WWF Asia Pacific Counter-Illegal Wildlife Trade Hub, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P attended the IWT internal online seminar "Understanding the Global Maritime Supply Chain and its links to the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)" as a guest speaker.

Mr. Kuramoto delivered a speech at the beginning the seminar. In his remarks, he underlined that Customs plays a critical role at the national borders to facilitate legitimate trade with reasonable enforcement operation including illegal trafficking of wildlife. He also emphasized that Intelligence is a key and core in our enforcement operation at the frontline, and Customs

need to maintain and improve the enforcement functions inline updated the trends of illegal activities. Collaboration in a timely manner with counterparts is key, namely Customs administrations and RILO network of the WCO.

This seminar was organized and designed by Asia Pacific Counter-Illegal Wildlife Trade Hub for WWF and TRAFFIC staffs in Asia Pacific region for aiming to further understanding the core points of CITES and its environmental surrounding this issue.

Enhanced Cooperation with APPU

31 May 2022, Bangkok Thailand



Mr. Norikazu KURAMOTO, the Head of the ROCB A/P and Ms. YE Zhengqing (Grace), the Program Manager of the ROCB A/P discussed with Mr. LIN Hongliang, the Secretary General of the APPU on May 31 2022 enhanced collaboration between the ROCB A/P and the APPU on Customs-related Capacity Building activities at the APPU head office at Bangkok, Thailand.

Mr. LIN welcomed the representatives of the ROCB A/P and appreciated the ROCB A/P continued support of the APPU and emphasized the importance of the cooperation between Post

and Customs. Furthermore, Mr. Lin delivered a brief introduction on the APPU and updated the future activities and acknowledged the ROCB A/P's strong support of these events.

During this visit to the APPU, Mr. Kuramoto expressed his appreciation for long standing close collaborative relationship between the ROCB A/P and the APPU and he shared updates on the MoU signed between the WCO and the UPU early this month. Furthermore, he pointed out the importance of cooperation, such as the exchanging electronic advance data to allow Customs to manage risks and facilitate the flow of legitimate parcels. Mr. Kuramoto reaffirmed that in line with the objectives of the MoU, ROCB A/P, as the leading Capacity Building office of the WCO would dedicate to enhancing the cooperation with the APPU.

Both parties found this visit wonderful opportunity to exchange views and agreed to continue to explore the future cooperation in Customs-related areas.

ROCB A/P attended the 11th ASEAN – World Customs Organization (WCO) Consultation

8 June 2022, hybrid mode, Singapore



At the invitation of the ASEAN Secretariat, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P attended the 11th ASEAN – World Customs Organization (WCO) Consultation at the 31st Meeting of the ASEAN Directors- General of Customs held on 8 June 2021 in Singapore in person. This meeting was convened face-to-face and online. Ms. Sherman YU, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P attended the meeting virtually.

In the opening remarks, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, the Secretary General of WCO briefly explained the latest hot topics of WCO, such as Digitalization and Green Customs, as well as the importance of pandemic resilience efforts of Member countries. Dr. Mikuriya also took the opportunity to express his appreciation to the most current developments, priority programmes and the strategic directions done by ASEAN Members as well as to explain the WCO's application for mining the seizure and offence data used in national Customs called nCEN in which ASEAN members have expressed interest.

During the meeting, Mr. Kuramoto introduced the capacity building activities of the ROCB AP including cooperation with Regional Entities in AP region as well as the forthcoming workshop plan to the ASEAN Members. Dr. Mikuriya then delivered closing remarks to conclude this session. He thanked ASEAN countries for their ongoing support to the WCO and will look forward more capacity building activities to be organized in the region.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ho Chee Pong, Director-General of Singapore Customs and co-chaired by Mr. Rey Leonardo B Guerrero, Commissioner of Philippines Customs. This meeting provided a platform to exchange views on international and emerging Customs issues.

The WCO Asia/Pacific Sub-Regional Data Analytics Hybrid Workshop for Pacific Islands

7 – 9 June 2022, Nadi, Fiji hosted by ROCB A/P



The WCO Asia/Pacific Sub-Regional Data Analytics Workshop for Pacific Island was held from 7 to 9 June 2022 in Nadi, Fiji in hybrid format allowing for remote and on-site participation. Mr. Ilkwon HAN, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P attended as facilitators/coordinators for the workshop and Ms. Sherman Yu, Program Manager also participated from the ROCB A/P.

The Workshop was the second hybrid sub-regional workshop in AP region, hosted by the ROCB A/P in close cooperation with the WCO and OCO under the sponsorship of the Korea Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Korea).

In total 21 participants (on-site 9, online 12) from 12 Customs administrations in the Pacific Island attended the Workshop together with the data experts from the WCO and KCS.

WCO has been focusing on supporting small island members by developing the SIEs Guidance Document in June 2020. Furthermore, ROCB AP are also working on RSP 2020-2022 to support the modernization efforts of Pacific Members who categorized as SIEs. In this regard,

this workshop has important contents and purposes of WCO.

During the workshop, experiences from 4 WCO members, namely Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Vanuatu and 2 OCO members namely, CNMI, Nauru were shared through the country presentations and the participants actively participated in the discussion for benchmark and information sharing. In addition, WCO and KCS Data Strategy were introduced along with BACUDA algorithm and data analytics experience from Lesotho case.

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

ROCB A/P joined Intelligence Network Seminar by RILO A/P

16 June 2022, online



At the invitation of the RILO A/P, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P attended the Regional Seminar in Asia Pacific region held on 16 June 2021 virtually hosted by RILO A/P.

In the opening session, Mr. Kuramoto explained that illicit drugs are a large concern in Customs enforcement and Customs play a key role to counter drug smuggling through targeting the high-risk cargo and passengers at the national borders. To improve our operation, from a professional aspect, it is essential to keep updating information in active collaboration with neighboring Customs and international organizations. While the RILO A/P serves as a central hub function for information exchange in the region, Members' role are to leverage and maximize our efforts with the advantage of the RILO network. He also stressed that ROCB A/P also fully supports Asia Pacific Members in delivering capacity building activity for improving enforce capability in close cooperation with the RILO A/P.

The ROCB A/P attended the Webinar “Following the Money Trail of the Illicit Wildlife Trade: Convergence of Maritime Trade Chain Efforts and Financial Crime Investigations”

21 June 2022, Webinar hosted by the ADB

The image shows a webinar interface. On the left is a large blue slide with white and yellow text. It features a circular portrait of Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the Regional Office for Capacity Building, World Customs Organization (WCO). The slide title is 'FOLLOWING THE MONEY TRAIL OF THE ILLICIT WILDLIFE TRADE' with a subtitle 'Convergence of maritime trade chain efforts and financial crime investigations'. The date and time are '21 June 2022 3:00 PM HK / SGT'. At the bottom of the slide are logos for ADB, TSP, UK Government, RILO Asia Pacific, ROCB Asia Pacific, Wildlife Justice Commission, and WWF. On the right side of the interface is a small video feed showing a woman speaking, with a Japanese flag visible in the background.

FOLLOWING THE MONEY TRAIL OF THE ILLICIT WILDLIFE TRADE
Convergence of maritime trade chain efforts and financial crime investigations

21 June 2022
3:00 PM HK / SGT

MESSAGE FROM
NORIKAZU KURAMOTO
Head
Regional Office for Capacity Building, World
Customs Organization (WCO)

ADB TSP UK Government RILO Asia Pacific ROCB Asia Pacific Wildlife Justice Commission WWF

The Webinar “Following the Money Trail of the Illicit Wildlife Trade: Convergence of Maritime Trade Chain Efforts and Financial Crime Investigations” was held online on 21 June 2022. This Webinar was jointly organized by the Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program (TSCFP) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with the Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC), the World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF), RILO A/P and ROCB A/P. Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager, and Ms. Kanyawarat Sitthikunpanit, Program Coordinator of ROCB A/P, attended this Webinar on behalf of ROCB A/P.

In the opening ceremony, Ms. Mamiya read Mr. Kuramoto’s opening remarks on his behalf. The speech highlighted that the Customs administration plays a crucial role in combatting the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and ROCB A/P has assisted WCO Members in the Asia Pacific region in building their capacity to fight against illicit trade while strengthening cooperation with the other development partners including the WWF. Moreover, the Frontline Customs Officers’ Guide to Key Multilateral Environmental Agreements which the WCO developed and released in December 2021 was introduced in the speech.

During the Webinar, the various guidelines, tools and operations to combat IWT and financial crime, which is closely linked to IWT, were introduced. The way forward towards enhancing cooperation with the financial institutions and the methods to detect IWT at the border were actively discussed.

This Webinar provided the opportunity for the AP Members and the other stakeholders to deepen their understanding of useful tools for enforcement and the recent trends in IWT. Furthermore, the Webinar resulted in enhancing cooperation between ROCB A/P, RILO A/P, WWF, ADB and the other development partners.

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Ms. Vareemon CHAIRUNGSRILERT

Ms. Kanyawarat SITTHIKUNPANIT

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