



In this issue

- 🌸 The Success of 2nd RCL Heads Meeting in Establishing a New Communication Framework for RCLs in A/P region
- 🌸 The Second Edition of the WCO Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs

FOREWORD

Dear Readers,

Greetings from Bangkok ROCB A/P.

April in Bangkok is the hottest month of the year and we had a traditional Thai National event called Songkran. It is commonly known as the "Water Splashing Festival" and literally everyone splashes water on each other in the streets. This year was the first time in two years that the event was held nationwide since lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. We hope everyone enjoyed your time and this season to the fullest.

WCO held meetings related to capacity building in February, namely the Global Meeting of Regional Entities and the Capacity Building Committee. Regional Entities gathered and discussed further utilization of this framework. Members also discussed how to provide more appropriate and better workshops to its members. We hope that our discussions will lead to future improvements.

The latest E-Newsletter No 80, features activities undertaken with Asia-Pacific members in the third quarter of WCO Fiscal Year 2022/23 (January through March 2023). There are two special essays in this E- Newsletter, namely (1) The Success of 2nd RCL Heads Meeting in Establishing a New Communication Framework for RCLs in A/P region by Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager of ROCB A/P and (2) The Second Edition of the WCO Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs by Ms. Pavida Tarapoom (May), Assistant Program Manager of ROCB A/P. We sincerely hope you enjoy ROCB A/P's special essays and use them as reference material for policy officials and field officers.



As for ROCB A/P's articles, I would like to briefly touch on our staff updates. I am pleased to say welcome Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager as a secondment official from the Korea Customs Service. He joined the ROCB A/P in January 2023 and covers East, Central and West Asia as a Country Manager. On behalf of our office, I would like to express my highest appreciation to Korea Customs Service for continuously seconding talented officials to ROCB A/P.

In addition to that, I am also pleased to say welcome Mr. Louis Chan, Program Manager as a secondment official from Hong Kong Customs. He joined the ROCB A/P in March and covers ASEAN members as a Country Manager. On behalf of our office, I would like to express my highest appreciation to Hong Kong 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, reading 'Norikazu Kuramoto' in Japanese characters (倉本 智和).

Norikazu Kuramoto (Mr.)

Head of the ROCB A/P

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| The Success of 2 nd RCL Heads Meeting in Establishing a New Communication Framework for RCLs in A/P region | 1 |
| The Second Edition of the WCO Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs | 11 |

Workshops and Meetings

| | |
|--|----|
| ROCB A/P support WCO Sub-Regional Workshop on cross-border E-Commerce | 14 |
| ROCB A/P celebrate International Customs Day with Thai Customs | 16 |
| Japan Customs visit to the ROCB A/P | 17 |
| ROCB A/P attended 18 th the Global Meeting of the Regional Entities established by the WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices | 18 |
| ROCB A/P attended 22 nd Session of the Integrity Sub-Committee | 19 |
| ROCB A/P attends the 14 th Capacity Building Committee | 20 |
| Asia-Pacific Members discussed how to utilize the CEN and enhance regional/global cooperation | 21 |
| ROCB A/P support WCO Regional Workshop on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) | 23 |
| U.S. Customs and Border Protection visit to the ROCB A/P | 24 |
| ROCB A/P welcomed new Secretary-General of APPU | 25 |
| Five-Day Train-the-Trainer workshop on Implementing Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs | 26 |
| ROCB A/P attended 43 rd Session of Enforcement Committee | 27 |

Staff Update

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Welcome Message from Mr. Jaemin Cho | 29 |
| Farewell message from Sherman YU | 30 |
| Welcome Message from Mr. Louis Chan | 31 |

The Success of 2nd RCL Heads Meeting in Establishing a New Communication Framework for RCLs in A/P region



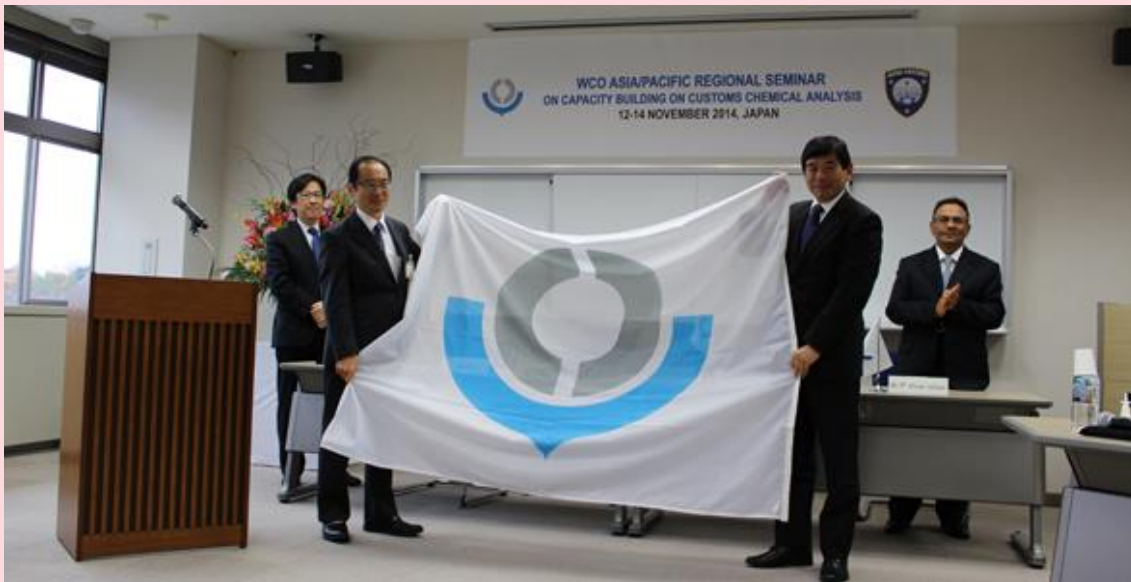
Jaemin CHO (Mr.)

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

1. The Vital Role of Customs Laboratories and Regional Customs Laboratories (RCLs)

Customs laboratories perform a critical function in ascertaining the Harmonized System (HS) classification and facilitating the collection of duties and taxes for imported and exported goods. At the same time, the analysis of seized drugs by Customs is an equally important role. Their analytical reports serve as a valuable resource for Customs authorities to ensure accurate and appropriate revenue collection; have a significant impact on the decision-making processes of customs administrations and courts as evidentiary proof. These days, Customs laboratories are increasingly expected to play a more diverse and expanded role in areas such as analysis for Advance Ruling, health and safety, Origin of FTA, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection, and Illegal drug enforcement. To meet these demands, they leverage their specialized expertise in item analysis.

RCL history started in the Asia Pacific region. In response to the ever-changing demands of the Customs environment, the World Customs Organization (WCO) has taken the initiative to authorize certain Customs laboratories as Regional Customs Laboratories (RCLs) to foster collaboration and enhance capacity-building among Customs laboratories within their respective regions. In 2014, RCL Japan was recognized as the first RCL in the world.



As of July 2023, there are five RCLs in the Asia Pacific region, located in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, and Korea. As the global economy becomes increasingly interconnected, Customs laboratories and RCLs are expected to carry out analyses quickly and accurately while maintaining higher levels of cooperation.

2. 2nd RCL heads meeting held via hybrid format, combining in-person and online

In the previous year, the ROCB A/P successfully organized the inaugural Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory (referred to as the “1st RCL Heads Meeting”) on May 10th, 2022. Given the COVID-19 related travel restrictions, the meeting was held virtually. However, this year, with the easing of the



COVID-19 pandemic situation, the 2nd Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory (hereafter referred to as the “2nd RCL Heads Meeting”) was conducted in a hybrid format, combining both in-person and online attendance.

The meeting was attended by approximately 30 participants and observers from all Heads and colleagues of RCLs in the Asia Pacific region, as well as representatives from the WCO Secretariat, Asia Pacific Vice Chair Secretariat, RILO A/P, and ROCB A/P. The meeting was convened with the following objectives: (I) To present updates and developments related to WCO, Vice Chair, RILO A/P, and ROCB A/P; (II) To exchange information on Customs



Laboratory matters including its activities, trends in classification, and illicit drug trade and capacity-building; (III) To discuss experiences and foster cooperation among WCO Regional Customs Laboratories in the Asia/Pacific region, particularly on the RCL Professionals Programme 2022/23. Finally, the participants had the opportunity to

tour RCL Japan and Tokyo Customs. The next paragraph provides an overview of the topics that were presented and discussed during the 2nd RCL Heads meeting.

3. Stakeholders' remarks and update presentations

On behalf of this event organizer, Grace Ye, the Program Manager of ROCB A/P, and I, Jaemin Cho, the Program Manager of ROCB A/P had the honor of serving as the meeting's MC. The meeting was initiated with an opening speech by Mr. Hiromi Masuhira, Director General of RCL Japan, followed by welcoming remarks from Ms. Akiko Kojima, WCO Regional Development Manager (RDM) for the A/P region, Mr. Kyung-sik Chae, Deputy head of RILO A/P, and Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P. All Remarks welcomed the 2nd RCL Heads meeting and confirmed the importance and encouraged the cooperative relationship among us.



Followed by the opening session, the WCO, Vice Chair, RILO A/P, and ROCB A/P provided its updates on recent developments, while the participants shared their views on the topics discussed. The information from the stakeholders in WCO and AP regional frameworks was very significant for RCLs.

4. RCLs' presentation

Every RCL made a presentation outlining their facilities, configuration, recent advancements, and key points such as the history of their RCL, their administrative structure as well as their thoughts on the challenges and experiences that they encountered while performing their duties. They also actively exchanged views among RCLs. By bringing together the RCLs and other participants, the 2nd RCL Heads Meeting served as a beneficial occasion for all to gain insight into one another's operations, exchange valuable strategies, and promote greater cooperation moving forward.

5. WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme

The WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme was launched in 2013 as the WCO/Japan Regional Customs Laboratories Programme. This programme provides an opportunity for technical officers to expand and update their knowledge and skills in the chemical analysis of samples for Harmonized System (HS) classification purposes.



As of today, RCL Japan and RCL Korea are actively supporting this programme. It is designed for laboratory analysts who are or will be working in Customs laboratories. Participants will gain practical experience at RCL Japan or RCL Korea and gain knowledge about the HS at WCO. Under this Programme, selected Customs officials of an appropriate technical level will be given an opportunity to study for one week at the WCO Headquarters



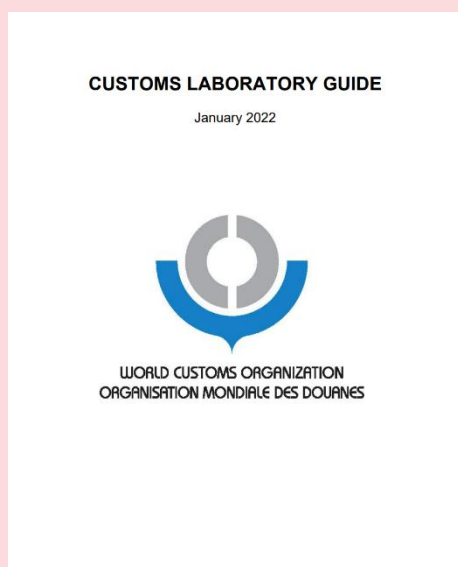
and then, will be divided into two teams for six weeks at RCL Japan or RCL Korea, to acquire practical experience. In October 2022, The WCO successfully organized the 'WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme,' which was followed by a six-week training session at RCL Japan and RCL Korea from October to December 2022.

During the 2nd RCL Heads Meeting, RCL Japan and RCL Korea presented training schedules and challenges for training in regard to WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme in 2022. Two experts who participated in this programme in 2022 provided experiences of participating in this programme, and their own opinions about this programme. Overall, it was noted that participants in the programme were satisfied with learning new methods and best practices. Nonetheless, there were certain challenges in the programme as well. Common obstacles encountered during the training at RCL Japan and RCL Korea included a tight schedule, effective time management, acquiring standard samples, and other issues. Additionally, given the differing first languages and English language proficiency levels of both trainers and trainees, there was also a language barrier to overcome.

6. Updates of the Customs Laboratory Guide and the HS Classification table

The Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate of the WCO provided a comprehensive overview of WCO's latest updates. One of the key topics discussed was the update of the Customs Laboratory Guide (CLG), which was approved during the 38th session of the scientific sub-committee. The CLG (2022) has been developed as a practical guidebook for customs laboratories in developing countries, with a focus on implementing "best practices" for laboratory operations. Notable changes from the previous year include updates to Appendix III, which provides summary information on Customs Laboratory,

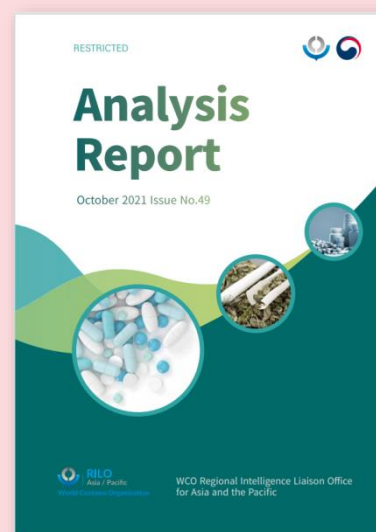
updates to Appendix V, which provides regional contact points and links to relevant information, and the addition of new Appendix VIII, providing HS classifications for substances controlled by various conventions (the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Montreal Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Programme Global Shield), respectively. The HS Committee also approved the classification of 462 International Nonproprietary Name (INN) products during its March meeting, which resulted in an update to the INN table. The updated INN table will be accessible on the WCO website in June, providing valuable information to professionals in the field.



7. Illegal Drug Trend and overview

Understanding the trends in illegal drug detection is crucial since laboratories are responsible for determining the types of drugs seized by Customs. RILO A/P has implemented several activities, such as Intelligence Liaison, CEN Management, relative Capacity Building, International Cooperation, Joint Operations, and Intelligence Projects. RILO A/P provides assistance to member Customs Administrations in their specific cases regionally and communicates and cooperates with Customs Administrations across the WCO Global RILO Network internationally.

In 2022, RILO A/P improved liaison activities by approximately 40%, including forwarding information, feedback, and reference materials. To promote information exchange and to strengthen control over major issues in the AP region, RILO A/P has organized Regional Seminars and Workshops, dispatched RILO intelligence analysts for expert missions, and provided training for RILO A/P joint projects and CEN Database utilization. RILO A/P participated in a lot of meetings and webinars in 2022, including the 33rd Administrative Meeting for National Contact Points of RILO A/P in Korea, which had 110 participants. At the 2nd RCL Heads Meeting, participants were also given the opportunity to learn about collaborative initiatives, such as IRENE III, Mekong Dragon IV, and Demeter VIII, as well as intelligence projects such as Tobacco, Hazardous Wastes, and Drugs. In 2023, RILO A/P intends to hold Regional Seminars for members, in addition to a pre-operational workshop ahead of the operations to further reinforce capacity-building efforts.



8. WCO and ROCB A/P: Overview of capacity building activities and future plan

Enhancing customs enforcement capabilities through Capacity-Building is a crucial strategy for modernizing Customs. WCO and ROCB A/P explained several Capacity-Building activities carried out in the fiscal year 2022/2023 and shared the 2023/2024 work plan.



At the 2nd RCL Heads Meeting, participants received updated information regarding WCO's Capacity-Building policy. Members endorsed a new Strategic Plan for the 2022-2025 period during the 2022 WCO Council Sessions, with a new Strategic Objective of "Organizational Development" compared to the previous strategic plan for 2019-2022, which includes human resources management. This objective led to two topics being added to the WCO Implementation Plan 2022-2023. The first topic aims to develop training materials and modules for enhancing staff resilience and stress management, while the second topic aims to modernize Human Resource Management. There are eight major programs, including (1) Framework of Principles and Practices on Customs Professionalism, (2) People Development Diagnostic Tool, (3) People Development Diagnostic Tool, (4) Leadership and Management Development, (5) High-Level Dialogue, (6) Career Development Programmes, (7) E-Learning & CLiKC!, (8) WCO Academy. Notably, the WCO Accredited Customs Experts Portal, a web-based platform facilitating the WCO management and mobilization of WCO Accredited Customs Experts, has been operational since September 23, with 951 experts and 1,009 missions registered.

In the Asia/Pacific region's fiscal year 2022/2023, ROCB A/P collaborated with various regional entities, either by organizing workshops and conferences or through scheduled meetings. ROCB A/P emphasized the value of its published materials, particularly the



Brochure of Regional Entities Vol.2, which focused on Customs Laboratories. ROCB A/P encouraged RCLs to participate in the capacity-building activities that ROCB A/P organizes.

ROCB A/P also emphasized that Annual Needs Survey is an important tool for ROCB A/P to identify member-specific requirements for organizing workshops. The Annual Work Plan is based on surveys, needs analysis, program development, WCO priority, and ad-hoc requests. The RCL heads meeting is an excellent opportunity to gather Capacity-Building requirements from participants to modernize the Asia/Pacific region, specifically in the customs analysis and the WCO Accredited Customs Experts. ROCB A/P introduced expected several activities for the next fiscal year, including a Regional Workshop, and a Sub-Regional Workshop on Customs Laboratory.

RCLs expressed the intention to cooperate with WCO's capacity-building activity and welcomed the idea of a workshop or short-term course to deepen chemists' understanding of HS classification and expressed their desire for more opportunities to attend workshops on textile and other commodity analysis methods. During discussions, the advantages of the WCO Accredited Customs Experts system also was highlighted.

9. A new Initiative for fostering cooperation among RCLs in the Asia/Pacific region

During the 2nd RCL Heads Meeting, a new cooperation initiative was discussed, aiming to promote collaboration among RCLs in the Asia/Pacific region. This initiative seeks to broaden the scope of communication between RCLs beyond customs chemical analysis to encompass other relevant subjects.



Several opinions were discussed, covering topics such as the potential establishment of a Technical Group or Committee among RCLs in the Asia/Pacific region to enhance technical cooperation. And the significance of training chemists in the detection of illicit drugs, NPS, and restricted chemicals was emphasized. Additionally, there was a suggestion to foster knowledge exchange by organizing visits to other RCLs to learn about their specialized work.

In summary, the primary objective shared by RCLs is to establish a robust communication platform that will enable RCLs to exchange views on the topic of the Collection of Best Practice on Customs Analysis, and share information about their capacity-building experience, the WCO RCL Professionals Programme, Workshops, and other related meetings. Moreover, there is a keen interest in seeking advice and consulting with one another regarding updated analytical methods, chemist training, and analysis result reports. Finally, all RCL agreed to create “RCL detailed contact point list in A/P region” as a new communication framework.

10. Customs Laboratory Tours

During this meeting, RCL Japan provided the opportunity to observe the Central Customs Laboratory of Japan (RCL Japan) and the Tokyo Customs Laboratory. Participants fully enjoyed seeing several laboratory rooms and its analysis equipment as well as learnt how to utilize these analysis machines directory at the RCL Japan. Whilst visiting the Tokyo Customs Laboratory,



experts provided insight to what they do as an operational Customs laboratory especially with seized drug analysis. Participants exchanged views with chemists actively in these tours.

11. Way forward

The 2nd RCL Heads Meeting served as a valuable platform for RCLs in the A/P region to exchange experiences and best practices, discuss challenges, and explore possible solutions. The participants actively engaged in discussions and gained significant knowledge from one another. The RCLs in the A/P region expressed keen



interest in the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme and a new

initiative to foster cooperation among RCLs. The Hybrid delivery mode further encouraged participation and engagement.

The 2nd RCL Heads Meeting exemplified successful collaboration between the WCO secretariat, ROCB A/P, RILO A/P, and RCLs in promoting regional cooperation and Capacity-Building in Customs Laboratory. The 2nd RCL Heads Meeting also deepened the participants' understanding of trends in illicit drugs and their impact on the Customs Laboratory. It confirmed the RCLs' need for capacity building, such as training chemists in HS classification and WCO Accredited Customs Experts.



The ROCB A/P pledged to continue supporting the work of the WCO and acting as a bridge between RCLs in the A/P region and WCO. In this framework, ROCB A/P will promote tools, conventions, instruments, and hot topics of the WCO to RCLs in A/P region.

The 2nd RCL Heads Meeting also highlighted the RCLs' interest in capacity building and their recognition of the meeting's significance in this regard. RCL Korea expressed a desire to host the 3rd RCL Heads Meeting in 2024 and all RCLs agreed to this arrangement. The next meeting will be held in person rather than online.

For further inquiries on the article, please contact me at Jaemincho@rocbap.org

The Second Edition of the WCO Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs



Pavida Tarapoom (Ms.)

Assistant Program Manager, ROCB A/P

Introduction

Since 2013, Gender Equality and Diversity has been part of the WCO capacity building important agenda. In continuing its efforts to promote the advancement of gender equality and diversity in Customs, and it is proved that development programs and capacity building activities can improve overall outcomes and ensure sustainability of activities, the WCO launched several tools and initiatives to maximize potential of our Members.

The WCO has increased its efforts in GED and has kept the topic high as its agenda and Many Members have stepped up their efforts to advance GED in Customs through recommended WCO initiatives.

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, 8 March 2021, the first edition of the Compendium of Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs which covers practices from Members was launched. The compendium is one of the WCO initiatives promoting GED and inspiring Members to take further actions. Furthermore, in response to Members interest, the second edition of the Compendium was released in March 2023 to serve as a publication for Members on how to become more gender-responsive and inclusive.

On this occasion, I will highlight the “The Second WCO Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs” to readers and shows its importance as to why we need this for our customs community.

The Second Edition of the Compendium

The latest Compendium consists of 12 practices from 11 Members and 1 ROCB to illustrate several of the key GEOAT principles and indicators from crosscutting policies to concrete initiatives to address particular issues, namely,

- Argentina Customs
- Canada Border Service Agency
- Central Customs Authority of Germany
- Indonesia Customs
- Irish Tax and Customs
- Mauritius Revenue Authority
- Peru Revenue Authority
- East and Southern Africa Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB ESA)
- South African Revenue Service
- State Customs Service of Ukraine
- Zambia Revenue Authority
- Zimbabwe Revenue Authority



This second compendium on GED aligned with the 2020 Declaration of the Customs Co-Operation Council on GED in Customs and objectives of the new network. As well as the first edition of the Compendium, it seeks to complement the GEOAT by providing practices of Members on GED in their administrations to share more practices and lessons learned on advancing gender equality and diversity. Implementing gender responsive and inclusive

measures is often linked to the national legislative frameworks which can also be the result of proactive initiatives from the Customs administrations to drive this agenda forward.

Sharing experiences from those Members helps to solidify initiatives to address particular issues such as promoting work life balance, valuing diversity in administrations, supporting women in career development, and preventing gender-based violence etc. In this occasion, it also provides possible inspiration across the WCO Membership to promote the agenda.

Way Forward

ROCB A/P still pays attention to Members' needs and focuses on strengthening capacities in Customs-related issues including the importance of Gender Equality and Diversity. We highly appreciate the support of AP Members in considering Gender Equality in promoting international opportunities, especially capacity building workshops. Together with raising awareness on importance of Gender Equality and Diversity in the Customs community under the WCO initiatives, it is hoped that this second Compendium inspires Members to take further action and share their experiences to foster further learning and global knowledge exchange. I believe that it is time for Asia Pacific Members to contribute to this compendium!

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

Workshops and Meetings

ROCB A/P support WCO Sub-Regional Workshop on cross-border E-Commerce

16th - 19th January 2023, Suva, Fiji



The WCO Sub-regional Workshop on cross-border E-commerce was held at the WCO Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Suva, Fiji, from 16th to 19th January 2023 with the financial support of the Customs Cooperation Fund of China (CCF-China). A total of 12 Customs officials from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu attended the workshop in-person. As the representatives of the ROCB A/P, Ms. Zhengqing Ye, the Program Manager and Operation Manager of the CCF-China and Ms. Kanyawarat Sitthikunpanit, the Program Coordinator joined this workshop.

Ms. Ye expressed her gratitude to the WCO experts and the RTC Fiji for supporting this workshop and emphasized the increased importance of trade facilitation for cross-border E-Commerce and the full implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in order to lower costs and increase efficiency in international trade in her opening remarks. During the

workshop she also introduced ROCB A/P's capacity building activities such as 2022/23 ROCB Action Plan and official publication. She demonstrated ROCB A/P's commitment to assisting AP Members in building their capacity. Moreover, she introduced the Follow-up Actions Survey conducted by the ROCB A/P to encourage the participants to utilize lessons learnt from this workshop to improve their home administrations' ability to adapt to the fast-evolving e-commerce environment.

Over the span of 4 days, important Customs topics relating to 16 standards of the WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce were examined and discussed. The six beneficiary Members were invited to deliver presentations focusing on revenue collection, facilitation, and control of cross-border e-commerce, which were the basis for valuable exchanges of information on challenges and possible solutions.

During his closing remarks, the Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, Mark Dixon, highlighted the opportunity provided by the Workshop to enhance cooperation in the sub-region on the important topic of cross-border e-commerce and expressed his readiness to support future sub-regional events at the WCO RTC in Fiji.

This Sub-Regional workshop provided an ample opportunity for our Member Administrations to leverage the knowledge obtained during the workshop to implement the E-Commerce FoS in view of addressing the challenges emanating from the growing volumes of e-commerce.

ROCB A/P celebrate International Customs Day with Thai Customs

26th January 2023, Bangkok, Thailand



At the invitation of the Royal Thai Customs, Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head, and his colleagues of ROCB A/P attended International Customs Day 2023 at the Thai Customs Department to celebrate International Customs Day with Thai Customs and the attendance. At the ceremony, WCO Certification of Merit was given to outstanding young officers from Mr. Patchara Anuntasilpa, Director-General of Thai Customs. The ceremony was also attended by Thai-based Customs attachés and officials from international organizations who celebrated together.

Japan Customs visit to the ROCB A/P

14th February 2023, Bangkok Thailand



Mr. Keiji Shibata, Deputy Director General, Japan Customs paid courtesy visit to Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, the Head of the ROCB A/P accompanied by his colleagues on 14th February 2023.

Mr. Kuramoto welcomed Mr. Shibata and Japan Customs' delegations to visit the ROCB A/P. At the same time, he expressed his highest appreciation to Mr. Shibata and Japan Customs for its long-standing support to the ROCB A/P since it's established in 2004.

Mr. Shibata expressed his appreciation for his leadership in delivering capacity building activities to Asia Pacific members and his commitment on the supporting the ROCB A/P and its members.

Taking this opportunity, Mr. Kuramoto introduced the ROCB A/P outline as well as the major functions and activities, especially how to organize workshop activity in Asia Pacific region followed by the introduction of his colleagues of the ROCB A/P. In addition to that, Mr. Kuramoto expressed that he looked forward to an ongoing close relationship with Japan Customs as a co-coordinator of Focus Area 3 (Capacity Building) of Regional Strategic Plan for Asia Pacific.

ROCB A/P attended 18th the Global Meeting of the Regional Entities established by the WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices

20th - 21st February 2023, Brussels, Belgium



The 17th Global Meeting of the WCO Regional Entities was held from 20th to 21st February 2023 at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, in a hybrid format. Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of ROCB A/P, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager, Ms. Zhengqing Ye, Program Manager, and Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager, represented the office to attend the meeting in person.

Mr. Kuramoto played a chair role of the Meeting. In addition to that, he presented on the cooperation activities with regional entities by ROCB A/P. He also reported at the plenary session an update on recent activities and challenges pertaining to the Asia Pacific region. This included the announcement of the Solomon Islands' accession as the newest member of the WCO, as well as plans for capacity-building activities. Notably, he highlighted the RTC heads meeting, and RCL heads meeting as examples of successful collaboration aimed at furthering the WCO's goals in the region. Finally, Mr. Kuramoto was re-elected as a chairperson of the next Global Meeting of Regional Entities in 2024.

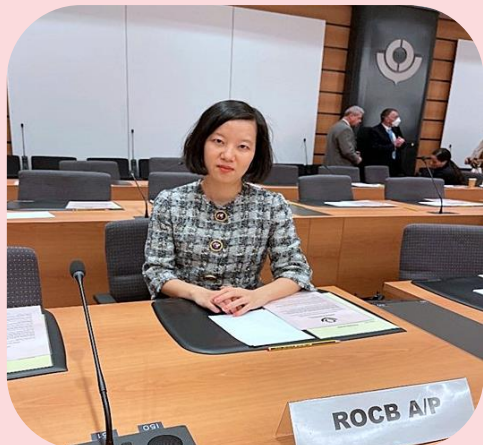
At this meeting, delegates from the Vice Chair's Office, Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB), Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO), Regional Training Centre (RTC), Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL), and Regional Dog Training Centre (RDTC) in the six WCO regions attended.

The objective of convening the Global Meeting is to facilitate the guidance and coordination of the activities of Regional Entities and Council Vice-Chairs' Offices in the domain of capacity building. This aims to foster greater collaboration among these entities, promote the adoption of uniform standards to ensure a cohesive approach and performance, and offer advice to the WCO Capacity Building Committee.

During the meeting, the delegates from different regional entities discussed the latest tools and initiatives developed by each WCO directorate. The lively discussion also included updates on the newest progress and best practices from each participating regional entity.

ROCB A/P attended 22nd Session of the Integrity Sub-Committee

27th - 28th February 2023, Brussels, Belgium



The 22nd session of the WCO Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC) was organized and hosted by the WCO at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium from 27th to 28th February 2023 in a hybrid format. More than 200 representatives participated in this conference. Mr. Zhengqing YE, the representatives of the ROCB A/P joined the meeting to explore the ways for a sustainable development of Customs Integrity.

This year the subcommittee devoted this session to the theme 'Harnessing data for integrity'. It emphasized the need for the International Customs Community to continue promoting integrity to ensure an effective and efficient supply chain during this challenging time.

The 22nd session of the ISC focused on the essence of maintaining Customs Integrity in the event of sustained emergencies such as global health crisis. Developing effective integrity strategies, strengthened organizational transparency, protected reporting, and

accountability mechanisms, raising awareness, developing public and organizational intolerance to corruption were addressed as primary tools for prevention and maintaining Customs Integrity.

During the Conference, ROCB A/P appreciated the great efforts made by the WCO Secretariat. ROCB A/P was updated by the continued work around the Customs Integrity Perception Survey (CIPS) and national good practices such as data-driven corruption risk management approach, the use and management of corruption report data and the use of Performance Contracts. Meanwhile ROCB A/P reaffirmed the importance to collaborate with external control agencies to fight against corruption.

ROCB A/P attends the 14th Capacity Building Committee

22nd – 24th February 2023, Brussels, Belgium

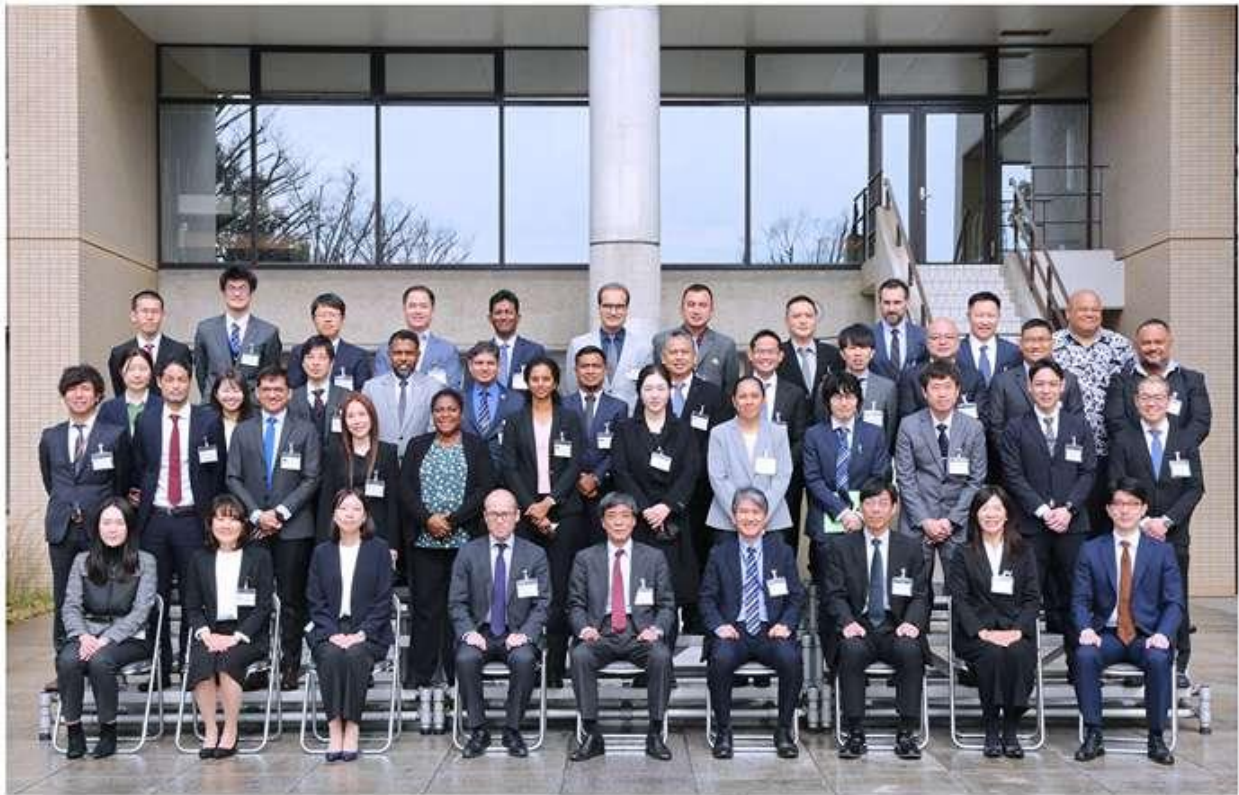
The 14th Capacity Building Committee was held from 22nd to 24th February 2023 in a hybrid format. Over 300 delegates from Member administrations and stakeholders attended in person or virtually. Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, Head of the ROCB A/P, and his colleagues also attended in person.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General, welcomed delegates to the Committee. In his opening remarks, he outlined the important topics to be discussed such as knowledge sharing and management, gender equality and diversity, blended learning, expert mobilization, data strategy and Mercator Programme to implement WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. He concluded his remark by wishing this Committee will deliver great outcomes for the WCO and its Members.

In the course of discussions, Mr. Kuramoto shared ROCB A/P's recent activities to build the capacity of AP Members and promote WCO tools. During the Committee, delegates actively shared their experiences and insights on the ongoing WCO's activities including the way forward in WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism, national training strategy, staff well-being, etc.

Asia-Pacific Members discussed how to utilize the CEN and enhance regional/global cooperation

6th - 10th March 2023, Kashiwa, Japan



WCO Regional Workshop on Data Management and Data Analysis against Illicit Trade in Kashiwa, Japan (6-10 March 2023)

The WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Data Management and Analysis against Illicit Trade was held from 6th to 10th March 2023 in Kashiwa, Japan, under the sponsorship of the Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). The Workshop was organized with generous support from the Japan Customs and Customs Training Institute of Japan (CTI). A total of 22 participants representing 21 Customs administrations in the AP region attended the Workshop and discussed topics related to data management and analysis as well as Customs Enforcement Network (CEN). Together with the WCO Accredited Customs Experts (ACEs) and the resource persons from RILO A/P, Ms. Yuko Mamiya, Program Manager, and Ms. Jate-arpa Benjaphong, Program Coordinator of the ROCB A/P also attended the workshop as facilitators/coordinators.

The Workshop kicked off with the opening address of Mr. Keiji Shibata, Deputy Director-General, Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance. He welcomed the

participants and expressed appreciation to the WCO and ROCB A/P for their efforts to organize this workshop. Mr. Shibata emphasized that it is necessary to respond to risks by properly collecting and analyzing information in order to adequately fulfill the Customs' role with limited manpower. He demonstrated the Japan Customs' commitment to supporting the WCO capacity building activities through CCF/Japan.

Ms. Mamiya also delivered opening remarks. In her remarks, she highlighted the importance of the utilization of CEN for data collection and analysis for better data-driven decision-making. She concluded her remarks by encouraging participants to use this workshop as the place for networking between WCO, ROCB, RILO and AP Members.

During the Workshop, participants actively shared their experiences and challenges in data management and analysis. Furthermore, participants discussed how to utilize the CEN and how to enhance regional and global cooperation. Ms. Mamiya updated ROCB A/P's recent activities and capacity building in the AP region. She also encouraged the participants to learn a lot from each other and utilize the lessons learnt for further development and modernization of the home administrations. Ms. Benjaphong introduced the follow-up action survey conducted by the ROCB A/P six months after the respective WCO regional/sub-regional workshop. She underlined that the workshop participants' follow-up actions are a key enabler for sustainable organizational development.

Mr. Yoshihiro Kosaka, Managing Director of the CTI, appreciated the participants' active contribution to discussions during the workshop in his closing remarks. He highlighted that regional cooperation in close collaboration with RILO A/P is one of the key enablers to further promote data collection and analysis. He also announced that the RILO A/P office will be relocated to Tokyo Japan in January 2024 and Japan Customs will make the utmost contribution to the region as the new host for the RILO office by carrying on its legacy.

The Workshop was successfully concluded with the participants' active contribution. The participants expressed their appreciation to the WCO, the ROCB A/P, the RILO A/P, the WCO ACEs, the Japan Customs and the CTI for their contribution to the workshop.

ROCB A/P support WCO Regional Workshop on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

12th – 16th March 2023, Langkawi, Malaysia



The WCO Regional Workshop on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) was held at the WCO Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Langkawi, Malaysia, from 12th to 16th March 2023 with the financial support of the Customs Cooperation Fund of China (CCF-China). A total of 25 Customs officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. As the representatives of the ROCB A/P, Zhengqing Ye, the Program Manager and Operation Manager of the CCF-China joined this workshop.

Ms. Ye expressed her gratitude to the WCO experts and the RTC Malaysia for supporting this workshop and emphasized the increased importance of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to fight against illegal trade in environmentally sensitive commodities. During the workshop she also introduced ROCB A/P's capacity building activities such as 2022/23 ROCB Action Plan and official publication. She demonstrated

ROCB A/P's commitment to assisting AP Members in building their capacity. Moreover, she introduced the Follow-up Actions Survey conducted by the ROCB A/P to encourage the participants to utilize lessons learnt from this workshop to improve their home administrations' ability to address the illegal trade in waste and wildlife.

Over the span of 5 days, important Customs topics relating to MEAs were examined and discussed. This Regional workshop provided an ample opportunity for our Member Administrations to leverage the knowledge obtained during the workshop in view of addressing the environmental challenges.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection visit to the ROCB A/P

14th March 2023, Bangkok Thailand



Mr. John Leonard, Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner (DEAC) of Office of Trade, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and his team paid a courtesy visit to Mr. Norikazu Kuramoto, the Head of the ROCB A/P on 14th March 2023.

During the visit, Mr. Kuramoto expressed his gratitude for the significant support provided by the US CBP to the WCO in the development and delivery of its international capacity building programs through training and technical assistance. He warmly welcomed Mr. Leonard and his team and expressed his anticipation for future collaborations in the WCO community. Mr. Leonard echoed the sentiment and emphasized the importance of capacity building for effective customs administrations, expressing his commitment to supporting the WCO and its members. In addition, Mr. Kuramoto explained the work of ROCB A/P and provided an introduction to other regional entities that support and facilitate capacity building activities for regional members.

As part of the visit, Mr. Kuramoto introduced all members of ROCB A/P and highlighted their current initiatives, including upcoming workshop activities to be organized in the Asia Pacific region.

Mr. Kuramoto expressed his appreciation to the US CBP and looked forward to further cooperation in the future.

ROCB A/P welcomed new Secretary-General of APPU

22nd March 2023, Bangkok Thailand



Mr. Norikazu KURAMOTO, the Head of ROCB A/P received the courtesy visit of Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh, the Secretary General of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) on 22nd March 2023.

During this visit, Mr. KURAMOTO expressed his congratulations to Dr. Vinaya on his new position as the Secretary-General of the APPU. Dr. Vinaya thanked Mr. KURAMOTO and appreciated ROCB A/P's continuous efforts to enhance collaboration with the APPU.

Taking this opportunity, Mr. Kuramoto outlined the major current initiatives of the WCO followed by the introduction on the ROCB A/P. After the introduction, Dr. Vinaya explained the Member's challenges and discussed the possibility of future cooperation such as providing expertise with APPC's training courses related to cross-border E-Commerce.

Mr. Kuramoto agreed to continue to explore the future cooperation in Customs-related areas and expressed his commitment to support with APPU as much as possible.

Five-Day Train-the-Trainer workshop on Implementing Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs

27th March 2023, Brussels WCO



During 13th - 17th March 2023, 'Five-Day Train-the-Trainer workshop on Implementing Gender Equality and Diversity (GED) in Customs' was organized by WCO at the WCO headquarters, Brussels, Belgium. Ms. Pavida Tarapoom, Assistant Program Manager of ROCB A/P participated.

This Train-the-Trainer workshop is aiming at creating a pool of recognized experts on GED. ROCB A/P, Ms. Pavida Tarapoom was selected to participate in the second phase of the expert selection, Train-the-Trainer workshop. 20 participants from 185 countries of WCO Members were selected in total.

During the 5 days, Ms. Pavida took this opportunity to share her experiences on GED in ROCB A/P on recent contributions including Thai Customs Department as her home Customs administration. She also mentioned the strong commitment of ROCB A/P to raise awareness of GED among AP Members through ROCB A/P activities and workshops in the future.

ROCB A/P attended 43rd Session of Enforcement Committee

27th - 31st March 2023, Brussels, Belgium



The 43rd session of the Enforcement Committee (EC) was organized and hosted by the WCO at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium from 27th to 31st March 2023. Mr. Zhengqing YE, the representatives of the ROCB A/P joined this meeting.

This 43rd session was special in two ways. First, the WCO was back on track with in-person meetings after previous years of virtual and hybrid work. Second, on the first day of this session, the 40th anniversary of the establishment current style EC was celebrated. The Session was opened by WCO Secretary General Dr. Kunio Mikuriya who recalled the evolution of the Enforcement Committee over the years. Dr. Mikuriya summarized 5 major evolution: 1) the scope in responding to the need for enhanced supply chain security; 2) technology involvement especially by using the WCO Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) and data analysis; 3) operations for raising the visibility of Customs contribution to protect society at borders and provide capacity building; 4) deployment of intelligence and risk management tools; and 5) cooperation with partners.

In the 5-day session, delegates took note and discussed the WCO Environment Programme, WCO Drugs Programme, WCO Security Programme, WCO Cultural Heritage Programme, WCO IPR, Health and Safety Programme, WCO Customs Operational Practices for Enforcement and Seizures (COPES) Programme, WCO Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Financing Programme and WCO Enforcement Committee Work programme in the area of Compliance & Enforcement. The EC, through its thorough discussions, provided guidance for further strategic and operational activities. The delegates took note of, discussed and approved a number of important activities, instruments and tools, as well as some new projects.

During the Conference, ROCB A/P was updated on the continued work done by the EC. Most importantly, all these updates will greatly contribute to our office's action work plan for the next FY. ROCB A/P will continuously dedicates itself to supporting the WCO enforcement and compliance activities by organizing high-quality capacity building programs in line with this year's theme: Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting Culture of Knowledge-sharing and Professional Pride in Customs".

Staff Updates

Welcome Message from Mr. Jaemin Cho



Hello Asia Pacific Members!

My name is Jaemin CHO. I am a new Program Manager in the ROCB A/P office.

It's a great honor for me to have this opportunity to work for ROCB A/P and Asia Pacific region. I am also honored to greet all of the colleagues of Asia Pacific Members.

I will briefly touch on my background. I am originally from the Korea Customs Service. I joined public service in 2014 after passing the Korean Bar exam. I have worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Korea Prosecution Service, and the Korea Customs Service for about 10 years.

For later five years, I worked as a Deputy Director in the Export-Import Logistics Division and the Legal Affairs Division at the Korea Customs Service headquarters. In particular, as a director of the litigation center on the Korea Customs Service, I had various experiences on legal matters related to International Trade, Customs Practice, Litigation, the Tax Tribunal, and Courts for Customs appeal cases. Furthermore, as a Deputy Director of the Legal Affairs Division, I was in charge of extensively advising Customs issues including the Determination of Customs Value, HS classification, Determining the Origin of the goods, and legislation work for designing the new system on these things from a legal point of view.

I think working at the ROCB AP is a new challenge as a new field for me. But I am so excited and will do my best to support and dedicate myself to the WCO and the ROCB A/P.

I hope that my knowledge of Customs will be of help to my colleagues in the WCO and ROCB A/P and contribute to the Capacity Building of the Member States in the Asia Pacific region. I really look forward to upcoming opportunity to collaborate with you.

Farewell message from Sherman YU

In the blink of an eye, my tenure comes to an end.



I was fortunate to be posted to ROCB A/P and worked here for 2 years. Throughout my journey, I experienced the hospitality of our hosting country. 'Land of smiles' is a well-earned title for Thailand. I treated Bangkok as my second home.

Being a part of this office has taught me a lot. To wrap up what I have done, it would be

'meetings, workshops and publications'. Looks easy but in fact the work is challenging, especially we are working in a region with multi-racial, diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Upholding the belief of 'diversity in harmony', which I was deeply convinced this should be one of the core values not only for ROCB A/P but for WCO as well, I think nothing is impossible. I see lots of collaboration and cooperation flourish in the region. As a common goal, I am sure the bonding and relationship is getting stronger among AP members. I'm appreciative of everyone that supported my development all along. I will bring back what I have learnt and experienced in ROCB A/P to my home administration. I do hope our friendship endures even after I go back to Hong Kong Customs. So long! All the best!

Welcome Message from Mr. Louis Chan

Greetings,

It is with great pleasure and honor that I introduce myself, Louis Chan from Hong Kong Customs, as the new member of the ROCB A/P family.

I am a graduate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, with a bachelor's degree in information engineering. My career with the Hong Kong Customs began in 2010, where I spent the first decade of my tenure working on enforcement as a frontline officer. My responsibilities included passenger and cargo processing at borders, as well as drug investigation at the airport.

In the last 3 years, I have shifted my focus towards trade facilitation. I was tasked with assisting in the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on AEO, ensuring the recognition rate of AEO in customs clearance, and organizing MRA meetings. My experience with AEO and MRA aspects has instilled a deep understanding and appreciation for the significance of such initiatives, and I am confident that my expertise will contribute to the works of ROCB A/P.

As the new Programme Manager at ROCB A/P, I embrace the responsibility of promoting the strategies, initiatives, and tools put forth by the WCO. I am excited to work alongside my colleagues at ROCB A/P, and I am confident that we will achieve great success as we navigate the challenges that lie ahead. Together, we will create many valuable memories, and I look forward to fostering fruitful collaboration with each and every one of you.



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