

*No. 13*

**ROCB A/P**  
**Good Customs Practice Report**  
**on**  
**Exemplifying Follow-Up Actions taken**  
**after the WCO A/P Regional Workshops**  
**in 2014/2015**



**February 2016**

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## *Foreword by the ROCB A/P*

One of the ROCB A/P's important missions is to evaluate the progress of the A/P Members at regular intervals, to both confirm progress and identify further development requirements. WCO and ROCB A/P try to accommodate Members' needs and deliver regional workshop to their best ability. In order to optimize the ramifications of these regional capacity building assistance programs, it is imperative to encourage the workshop participants to apply lessons-learned to their daily operations wherever appropriate and disseminate pertinent information to the right people in a timely manner. In this context, ROCB A/P has initiated "Survey on the Follow-Up Actions taken after the Participation in the WCO Regional Workshop (Regional Workshop Follow-Up Action Survey)" organized in the previous fiscal year, - i.e. 2014/2015. This Survey intends to collect pertinent information on the follow-up actions taken at their respective home administrations in the wake of participation in the Regional/Sub-regional Workshops. The Survey does not intend to evaluate and/or criticize any of reporting or recommendations the workshop participants have made.

This Good Practice Report features the summation of replies to the ROCB A/P' Survey and, in particular, highlights exemplified follow-up actions taken after the participation in the WCO A/P Regional Workshops conducted in 2014/2015. It is strongly hoped that other workshop participants are inspired by those exemplifying follow-up actions which will surely bear tangible outcomes in various forms, including institutional and individual performance improvement. At the same time, it is hoped that Member administrations also recognize the value of the Regional Workshops, which their representatives may make for the administrations' reform and modernization initiatives.

Taking this opportunity, ROCB A/P would like to express its profound appreciation to those Customs colleagues who provided invaluable inputs and sharing of information on a series of good practices of actions taken after their participation in the respective Regional Workshops. ROCB A/P encourages their continued commitment and involvement in their administrations' efforts in ameliorating operational performance efficiency and effectiveness.

February 2016



Kazunari Igarashi  
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## 1. Introduction

The Terms of Reference states that the ROCB A/P's overall objectives include the delivery of organizational development support to Members. The same specifies that ROCB A/P is required to evaluate the development progress of the members at regular intervals, to both confirm progress and identify further development requirements. Conduct of Annual Technical Needs Survey, which is done in cooperation with the Regional Training Coordinator (Japan Customs), is the actions to fulfill the aforementioned task. Given the financial and human resources are quite limited to deliver capacity building assistance, WCO and ROCB A/P do our best to prioritize the Members' needs and deliver the regional workshop irequired. At the same time, in order to optimize the ramifications of these regional capacity building assistance programs organized, it is imperative to encourage the workshop/seminar participants to apply these lessons learned to their daily operations wherever appropriate and disseminate pertinent information to the right people in a timely manner.

In this regard, ROCB A/P has initiated a "Survey on the Follow-Up Actions taken after the Participation in the WCO Regional Workshop (Regional Workshop Follow-Up Action Survey)." ROCB A/P has developed a questionnaire (herein after referred to as "ROCB A/P template") as appended to this Report. This Survey intends to collect pertinent information on the follow-up actions taken at their respective home administrations in the wake of participation in the regional/sub-regional workshops. This survey does not necessarily intend to evaluate and/or criticize any of reporting or recommendations the workshop/seminar participants have made. In fact, this is rather to take a sort of snapshot of the impact the technical cooperation programs have made to the administration's performance efficiency and effectiveness. It is also expected that the questionnaire will remind the workshop participants of their expected roles and actions after the respective regional capacity building programs.

It is natural course of action for ROCB A/P to compile relevant information on some of the innovative follow-up actions taken by the workshop participants and/or by their home administrations and disseminate them as one of Good Practice Reports with a view to further encouraging other workshop participants to follow similar approaches.

WCO has also developed a "Regional Training Evaluation Package" in the wake of a series of discussions at their relevant meetings in the context of professional development. The Package contains a set of evaluation and survey questionnaires, including the Participants' Follow-Up Action Assessment (hereinafter referred to as "WCO template"). Given the overall aims of the survey are somewhat similar, ROCB A/P circulated a copy of the questionnaire in the WCO template together with the ROCB A/P template on a trial basis. Considering the objectives and nature of the questions in the WCO template are slightly different from those of the ROCB A/P template, which are

more focused on the ramifications to the administration's daily undertakings.

Provided that the fiscal year 2014/2015 ended 30 June 2015 and the survey was conducted 6 months after the respective Regional Workshops have been conducted, the last survey was just completed in December 2015. Replies to these surveys were collated and analyzed early in January 2016.

Taking this opportunity, ROCB A/P expresses its sincere appreciation to those who responded to the Surveys and shared ramifications to his/her administration accrued from the respective WCO Regional Workshops.

## 2. Summation of the replies/inputs to the ROCB A/P's surveys

### (1) Responses from the participants

In 2014/2015, ROCB A/P organized a total of 13 Regional/Sub-Regional Workshops. Out of 13, excluding 3 Regional Workshops for the accreditation of Customs experts, 10 Regional Workshops were subject to the Follow-Up Action Survey. The questionnaires (both WCO template and ROCB A/P template) were sent to all of the participants approximately 6 months after the Workshops had been organized. Titles of the surveyed WCO Regional Workshops as well as the numbers of the participated administrations and the replies are shown in the following Table 1.

(Table 1)

WCO Regional Workshops subject to the Survey		No. of participated administrations	No. of replies
(1)	WCO Regional Seminar on Chemical Analysis (Nov. 2014)	23	11
(2)	WCO-UNESCAP Regional Workshop on Single Window in the context of the WTO TFA (Jan. 2015)	24	8
(3)	WCO Regional Workshop on AEO (Jan. 2015)	23	7
(4)	WCO Regional Workshop on Intelligence Management (Feb. 2015)	26	6
(5)	WCO-ADB Regional Workshop on Strategic Initiative for Trade Facilitation (Mar. 2015)	27	5
(6)	WCO-UNEP Joint Regional Risk Management Workshop on Environmental Issues (Apr. 2015)	26	9
(7)	WCO Regional Workshop on Countering Counterfeiting and Piracy (Apr. 2015)	21	5
(8)	WCO-ICAO Joint Workshop on Air Cargo Security and Facilitation (Apr. 2015)	26	3
(9)	WCO-UPU Joint Customs-Post Workshop (May 2015)	22	6
(10)	WCO Regional Workshop on the Use of PNR (May 2015)	23	8

## (2) Follow-Up actions taken by the workshop participants

The Survey revealed that the majority of participants who submitted their reports to their administrations and shared distributed training materials with their colleagues at the relevant departments/divisions through either by physical circulation or placing on intranet. It was identified that quite a good number of in-house workshops were organized by the participants from Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan and Tonga. Thanks to these commendable information sharing actions taken after the workshops, the training materials have been made available to a large number of their colleagues. Indeed, it is difficult to specify the number of their colleagues who have learned from those training materials brought back and shared by the workshop participants, but the replies indicate that average number is approximately 20. The largest dissemination was done by the Bhutan Customs participant and approximately 150 of his colleagues studied training materials used at the Regional Workshop on AEO conducted in January 2015. The number who indicated specific follow-up actions after the respective regional Workshops are shown in the following Table 2.

(Table 2)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Total
Shared training materials	8	6	6	5	5	8	4	2	5	6	55
Submitted report	8	5	7	3	5	7	4	1	4	6	50
Made recommendations	6	3	6	1	4	5	2	0	2	2	31
Organized in-house workshop	1	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	10
Developed operational manuals	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	2	0	0	10
Others	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	6

NB: Numbers in parentheses in the top line correspond to the sequential numbers of Regional Workshops shown in the Table 1.

It is encouraging the participants' reports are often accompanied by specific recommendations which the administrations may adopt in their daily operations or take more fundamental measures in order to remedy perceived gaps between their current practices and internal good practices. Another finding is some of these participants took the lead or were involved in developing/revising operational manuals applicable to their daily operations based on the lessons-learned from the workshops. Answers indicate as "others", include outreaching to other government agencies and private sector, including contribution to the amendment of relevant laws and regulations to align with learned good practices. For example, participants from Bhutan, China and Samoa contributed to outreaching to other stakeholders for disseminating acquired techniques and knowledge through lectures from the national workshops, which were attended by representatives from other government agencies and private sector, on the subjects of

IPR, TFA and environmental issues respectively.

### **(3) Application of lessons-learned from the Workshop for the administrations' performance improvement**

WCO explores and pushes forward “knowledge Customs” as part of supporting the Members' continued efforts in their Customs reform and modernization, in particular to keeping pace with the ever-changing working environment. As shown in the summation of the replies to the first question on specific actions taken, a good number of participants disseminated their lessons-learned and training materials to their relevant departments and divisions. Indeed, the knowledge and lessons-learned should be applied to the full extent possible in the course of the Member administrations' daily operations as the Workshops provide the participants with knowledge of the international standards as well as other Member administrations' good practice and success models realized through application thereof.

Replies to this question show that the beneficiary Customs indeed applied these lessons-learned to improve efficiency and effectiveness of their operational performance. It appears these application examples may be categorized into 2 aspects: namely (a) augmenting operational quality and practices; and (b) managerial actions aimed at enhancing statutory and institutional set-ups. Those inputs, which are of particular interests, include the following good practices:

#### **(a) Application for operational purposes**

- Improved quality of daily operation (e.g. examination of documents) with greater understanding of international standards (Thailand after the Air Cargo Security Workshop);
- Incorporated in new Standard Operational Procedures for air cargo exportation examination (Malaysia after the Air Cargo Security Workshop);
- Improved profiling techniques against air passengers (Hong Kong China, Korea and Vietnam after the PNR Workshop);
- Applied to expand existing AEO Program (Malaysia after AEO Workshop);
- Applied to evaluate the existing IT Systems (Indonesia after the Single Window Workshop);
- Introduced Post Seizure Analysis techniques as part of risk management (Hong Kong China after the Intelligence Workshop); and
- Applied ODS (Ozone Depleting Substances) indicators and set increased selectivity criteria in risk management module (Bangladesh and Mongolia after the Environment Workshop).

(b) Application for statutory enhancement purposes

- Formed a Committee to make a comprehensive plan to enhance the capacity of a Customs laboratory (Bangladesh after the Laboratory Workshop);
- Incorporated into the concept design of new IT system (Malaysia after the Single Window Workshop);
- Involved as one of the leading project managers of Customs Reform Project (Samoa after the Single Window Workshop);
- Revised functions of Intelligence and Risk Management Department based on the lessons-learned from other Members' set-ups (Maldives after the Intelligence Workshop);
- Incorporated as reference for many reform projects being initiated, including finalization of new Customs Law in line with the Revised Kyoto Convention (Bhutan after the TFA Workshop); and
- Recommended to aligning Customs laws and regulation with TFA (Pakistan after the TFA Workshop).

**(4) Observed direct effects realized from the application of lessons-learned**

In the wake of the dissemination and application of lessons-learned at administrative level on operational and institutional context, the Regional Workshops have resulted in a series of tangible benefits. The replies to this question are shown in the following Table 3.

(Table 3)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Total
Realized	4	2	5	3	3	4	3	1	4	4	33
Not realized	7	6	1	3	2	4	2	2	2	3	32

NB: Numbers in parentheses in the top line correspond to the sequential numbers of Regional Workshops shown in the Table 1.

More than half of the replies indicated positively, while the remaining replies indicated they have not found particular effects up until the time of the questionnaires were circulated. In fact, some of the negative replies explained that it could take some more time to realize the effects at the border mainly because the topics dealt at the Workshops have not been introduced yet (e.g. no laboratory, no mandatory API/PNR requirement) or the time required for the instillation and matured usage of the new methodologies.

Most immediate and prominent tangible results are the increase in the number of cases and seizures, for example, accomplished by Cambodia, Philippines and Samoa after the Intelligence Workshop, and India after the PNR Workshop. Other tangible and direct effects realized are as follows:

- New Standard Operational Procedure was developed on the control of dual-use goods (Malaysia after the Air Cargo Security Workshop);
- A change in screening techniques and increased interception and duty collection (Fiji after the Postal Workshop);
- Added new features at the Customs inspection counters at the airports (India after the PNR Workshop);
- Contributed in drafting new Customs law and rules (Bhutan after the TFA Workshop);
- Applied techniques and knowledge in the investigation of an ODS smuggling case (China after the Environment Workshop);
- Promoted anti-counterfeit campaign and continued seizures (Philippines after the IPR Workshop); and
- Realized closer cooperation with IP holders who organized 12 training sessions jointly for frontlines officers to identify counterfeit goods (Thailand after the IPR Workshop).

#### **(5) Perception on the improvement in work efficiency and effectiveness**

As supplemented in several negative replies to the above question on the realization of direct effects in 6 months after the respective Regional Workshops were conducted, direct and tangible results may not be necessarily realized immediately. However, it is expected that Workshops contribute to improving the administrations' performance efficiency and effectiveness on a continuous and sustainable way from a mid- and long-term perspective. Almost all of the replies agreed that the Workshops had contributed or will contribute to improve efficiency and effectiveness of their administrations' work from (a) tactical and (b) operational viewpoints as follows:

##### **(a) Tactical contributions**

- Being referred in the discussion at the Security Committee to identify any issues pertaining to aviation security (Malaysia after the Air Cargo Security Workshop);
- Identifying various areas which could be further developed and/or enhanced with the help of issues learned (Maldives after the Intelligence Workshop);
- Contributing to draft relevant laws and regulations (Maldives after the IPR Workshop); and
- Leading to enact new legislation and rules for mandatory submission of PNR (Bhutan after the PNR Workshop).

##### **(b) Operational contributions**

- Improving security screening of postal items (Fiji after the Postal Workshop);

- Assisting interoperability with UPU's Customs Declaration Systems and assisting with increased facilitation times with mail (India after the Postal Workshop);
- Enriching Standard Operational Procedures on laboratory (Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand after the Laboratory Workshop);
- Improving investigation and intelligence ability (Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong China and Mongolia after the Environment Workshop); and
- Raising awareness of the illicit trafficking in environmentally sensitive goods at managerial and frontline-levels (Cambodia and Sri Lanka after the Environment Workshop)

**(6) Modernization project initiated based on the lessons–learned from the Workshops**

It is encouraging to find that a series of new modernization projects have been initiated with a view to materializing anticipated improvement in the administrations' performance efficiency and effectiveness from mid- and long-term perspectives. The counting of the replies to this question is shown in the following Table 4.

(Table 4)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Total
Project initiated	8	5	6	3	3	2	2	0	6	5	40
Project not initiated	3	3	0	3	2	7	2	3	0	3	26

NB: Numbers in parentheses in the top line correspond to the sequential numbers of Regional Workshops shown in the Table 1.

Some of the reports commented on the modernization projects initiated in the wake of the participation in the Regional Workshops and applying learned internal standards and good practices are as follows:

- A pilot for linking ASYCUDA with post's system for better risk management and improved facilitation (Fiji, Japan and Mongolia after the Postal Workshop);
- Re-organization of postal Customs (Vietnam after the Postal Workshop);
- Initiation for PNR requirement (Sri Lanka after the PNR Workshop);
- New examination procedures based on risk management at airport (Vietnam after the PNR Workshop);
- Implementation of ISO/IEC17025 (Nepal after the Laboratory Workshop);
- Commencement of consultation with business to introduce Trusted Traders Program, which will be later upgraded to AEO Program (Papua New Guinea after the AEO Workshop);
- Establishment of rules and circulars guiding AEOs (Vietnam after the AEO

Workshop);

- Formulation and implementation of risk management framework in May 2015 (Maldives after the Intelligence Workshop);
- Establishment of Directorate General of Reform and Automation, which will be instrumental in enhancing automation of Customs clearance processing (Pakistan after the TFA Workshop);
- Incorporation of additional selectivity criteria in ASYCUDA World (Bangladesh after the Environment Workshop); and
- Launching of Ministry-level “Environment Week” for awareness-raising (Samoa after the Environment Workshop)

### **3. Observations by ROCB A/P**

As seen in the above, it was found the workshops participants brought an abundant of information and lessons-learned back home to disseminate to the right persons for their attention and practical application thereof. From this, ROCB A/P shares the following observations:

- ✓ Participants who took part in the workshop programs made specific recommendations and suggestions for improvement in the current operational practices;
- ✓ Regional Member administrations duly recognized the value of the WCO regional training framework and were open to listen to the suggestions/recommendations from the workshop participants and often incorporated these lessons-learned to make some changes in their operations for betterment; and
- ✓ Ramification accrued from the participants’ follow-up actions showed that the potential of application of these learns-learned are huge and they should not be underestimated.

In order to optimize the ramifications of these regional capacity building assistance programs, it is imperative to encourage the workshop/seminar participants to apply the lessons learned to their daily operations wherever appropriate and disseminate pertinent information to the right people in the right time. Believing that the ownership and commitment of the respective workshop/seminar participants and continued dialogue are the keys for reaping the good fruits from the collective efforts towards Customs reform and modernization, ROCB A/P is going to continue this initiative to optimize the value of the regional capacity building assistance programs in cooperation with the WCO Secretariat and other development partners.

For questions and comments to this study on the Regional Workshop Follow-Up Survey initiative, please write to [igarashi@rocbap.org](mailto:igarashi@rocbap.org).

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## ROCB A/P Questionnaire on the Follow-Up Actions taken after the participation in the WCO Regional Workshop

Event subject to survey:	
Conducted Date and venue of the Workshop:	
Participated Members:  (- i.e. The administrations the replies are being sought)	

(Notes)

1. *This Questionnaire is intended to collect pertinent information on the follow-up actions taken at your home administrations in the wake of the participation in the captioned Regional Workshop. Please kindly provide us with your inputs/information on the follow-up actions taken after the Workshop and up till today.*
2. *This questionnaire is never intended to evaluate and/or criticise any of reporting or recommendations you have made, but this is rather to take a sort of snapshot of impact of the technical cooperation, which the ROCB A/P has initiated in cooperation with the WCO secretariat.*

**Please return this questionnaire to:**

[rocb@rocbap.org](mailto:rocb@rocbap.org)

**by no later than dd mm 20yy**

Responding administration	
Name and contact e-mail address of Responder (i.e. Workshop participant)	(Name of responder/Workshop participant)
	(E-mail address)

Q1	After you have come back from the Workshop, what specific follow-up actions you have done up till today?	<p>(Please tick applicable answer(s) and/or fill in additional information, as appropriate)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Circulated/shared training materials with colleagues (Please specify the number of colleagues with whom you shared the training materials.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Submitted a mission report to superiors</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Made some recommendations to management officials for consideration</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Organized an in-house workshop to cascade-down lessons learned</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Developed/updated operation manuals, etc.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please describe below)</p>
Q1bis	In case you have circulated/shared training materials you have brought back, how many of your colleagues have learned from them?	(Please estimate approximate number)
Q2	How the lessons learned at the Workshop are being	(Please briefly describe)

<p>utilized at your administration in general?</p>	
<p>Q3 Have you observed any direct effects realized from the application of techniques acquired/shared with frontline colleagues (e.g. change of management approach, seizures at the border)?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please briefly describe the effects realized, where possible)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Q4 Do you consider that the Workshop has contributed or will contribute to improve efficiency/effectiveness of your administration's work?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please briefly describe "how" contributed /will contribute)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (Please briefly describe)</p>
<p>Q5 As a result of the Workshop and lessons learned, has any new modernization project initiated at your administration level?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please briefly describe the project(s) initiated, where possible)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Thank you for your cooperation

ROCB A/P