



WCO Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building

# ROCB A/P E-Newsletter No.60



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# Foreword



**Dear Readers,**

**Greetings from Bangkok!**

Thank you for your time reading this issue of the ROCB A/P E-Newsletter, which commemorates its 60<sup>th</sup> publication. Since its establishment in September 2004, the ROCB A/P has placed a great amount of importance to its visibility and accountability to the regional WCO Members and related development partners with a view to raising the profile of the Customs capacity building assistance activities in the A/P region. As part of its efforts and commitment, the ROCB A/P has issued its Newsletter every quarterly over the last 14 years and a half. There are some special issues, such as the one on the ROCB A/P's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony. I am so proud of continuing this public relation activities and am going to do more to promote the pertinent WCO's activities and showcase the regional Member administrations' accomplishment

in their reform and modernization efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to my ROCB A/P colleagues, both who served in the past and currently serving, for their tenacious and detailed service provided for compiling these E-Newsletters, and at the same time call for their continued commitment to maintain the quality of the capacity building assistance services to render.

This E-Newsletter features our activities undertaken in the first quarter of 2018, i.e. January through March 2018. It also carries an essay by Mr. Jo Hong-Young, Program Manager and CCF/Korea Operating Manger at our Office, on his experience and observations on capacity building assistance as an accredited expert in the AEO program. Furthermore, there is a special topic on the gist of the new Customs Good Practice Report on Exemplifying Follow-Up Actions taken after the participation in the WCO regional Workshops held in FY2016-17, which was published in February 2018.

In addition to the above reports on the work progress from the ROCB A/P, I would like to draw your attention to two special contributions provided by the Regional Training Center in Japan (Japan Customs Training Institute: CTI) and Vanuatu Customs and Inland Revenue Department. Japan CTI was awarded by President of Japan National Personnel Authority for the recognition of long-time and remarkable contribution to the human resource development both national and foreign Customs officials through their Customs cooperation programs. Director of Vanuatu Customs and Inland Revenue Department has shared their accomplishments in reform and modernization over the last 5 years as well as on-going efforts for changes to accommodate the needs of the time. The ROCB A/P would like to present its compliments and respects to both administrations for their dedication and showcasing good practices employed for enhancing core competence of the Customs in various forms.

The ROCB A/P is keen to hear any of your constructive comments and suggestions/inputs to our activities, including our communication and public relations activities, with a view to better servicing to the regional Member Customs administrations. Please rest assured that all of the ROCB A/P staff members will remain committed for the service required.

Kind regards,



Kazunari Igarashi  
Head of the ROCB A/P

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# **Special Essay on Partnership with Private Sector in Authorized Economic Operator (AEO)**

**By Hong-Young JO, ROCB A/P**



**Dear Readers,**

Greetings from Bangkok. I'm Hong-Young JO, a secondee from the Korea Customs Service (KCS) and currently undertaking the tasks as CCF/Korea Operation Manager, and Program Manager for East, Central, and West Asia of the ROCB A/P. I've been part of the WCO ROCB A/P Team for around half year since September 2017. I am one of the WCO Accredited Customs Experts on the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programs.

I attended a Workshop for the WCO Asia/Pacific Region on AEO and Mutual Recognition Arrangements/ Agreements (MRAs), which was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in Seoul, Korea, under the sponsorship of CCF/Korea (please refer to the pertinent article at <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/391/>). Promotion of the AEO Programs and MRAs was the main agenda, in which I contributed as a facilitator. With close cooperation and support of KCS colleagues, I facilitated a demonstration of the site validation practices and know-how during a field visit to a Korean AEO company, including mock exercise of a joint validation. I stressed the importance of raising awareness among both private and public sectors in order to enhance the AEO Programs. Through my professional experience in the KCS, I explained some of the main constraints and challenges that could occur when the AEO Program is implemented at the national level, and at the same time, I suggested specific solutions based on the practices applied to the Korean AEO program. It's an honor for me to make this special report on my professional experience to you. I hope this special essay provide you with better understanding of the AEO scheme more and thus you have a chance to deepen your thought on the AEO and MRA strategy by this article. Taking this opportunity, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to Mr. Kazunari IGARASHI, the head of the ROCB A/P, for his valuable advice and tips based on a wealth of experience and he guided the contents of this report to

be more abundant and brighter.

From my view, I'd like to make this topic with three subheads to deliver my thought efficiently.

## **1. What is the main goal of Customs administration? (Facilitation or Security)**

As you know, Customs administrations have twin goals. Customs administrations are required to optimize the security of the international trade supply chain while ensuring continued improvements in trade facilitation. The securities to the global supply chain and trade facilitation are kinds of contradictory mission. Before the 9/11 Terrorist attack in 2001 in the United States, the Customs community was more focused on the trade facilitation functioning. At that time they wanted to expedite the trade flow for saving logistics cost and collecting revenue efficiently. The 9/11 tragic incident, however, made a turning point to the Customs functions. The security to the global supply chain was outweighed trade facilitation. This trend, naturally, was dominated by the United States. The United States introduced various security programs like Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), Container Security Initiatives (CSI), 24 Hour Rule, and etc. The United States tried to secure its border through applying multi-layered approaches. Similarly, Canada introduced Partners in Protection (PIP) for ensuring the global supply chain security in 2002. New Zealand, also, implemented Secure Exports Scheme (SES) for enhancing security management in 2004. On June 2005, the WCO, as a sole intergovernmental organization specialized in Customs matters, adopted the SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE FoS) in order to make balances between trade facilitation and the security of the global trade supply chain. Most of the WCO Members have rendered "Letter of Intent" to implement the WCO SAFE FoS since then. It means that Customs administration would introduce the kinds of the AEO Program which can make a balance between trade facilitation and supply chain security. Singapore started Secure Trade Partnership (STP) in 2007. European Union operated fully Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) in 2008. China, Korea, and many other WCO Members have developed AEO Program based on the SAFE FoS. The WCO guided Customs administrations in making harmonized program to reach contradictory twin missions by adopting the SAFE FoS.

## **2. Is Partnership with private sector a new concept? (Focusing on my experience)**

The volume of global trade transactions has shown rapid increase year by year. World exports of manufactured goods increased from US\$ 8 trillion in 2006 to US\$ 11 trillion in 2016,

while personnel of Customs administrations were almost static over the past 10 years. To handle all trade transactions within limited resources, Customs administrations have applied Risk Management (RM). They diagnosed their functions, and then divided into two categories, i.e. risky or non-risky area. Customs resources have been allocated in proportion to the level of the perceived risk. They deployed directly their resources on risky area, e.g. investigation, inspection or surveillance part. They had no other choice but to place a few resources to non-risky transactions. To ensure the reliability of non-risky transactions, they cooperated with private sector. They wanted to share responsibility with business community, and therefore Customs administration and private sector signed for various MOUs. In this context, the AEO Program based on the SAFE FoS is not actually a new concept but an evolved cooperation scheme with private sector.

It was right after I came back from the United States after earning the Master's degree on the city and regional studies, when I got into the field of the AEO program. At that time the Korea Customs Service (KCS) was in the process of implementing the AEO program. The KCS formed a Task Force Team for developing the implementation infrastructure of the AEO Program, e.g. legislation and future roadmap. I was designated to the leader of validation team by the KCS considering my working career, which was taking part in developing a risk management strategic plan in 2000. The KCS gave me the authority to form validation team. I recruited nine members for three sub-teams. Each sub-team consisted of three members, qualified leader who worked over 15 years as an auditor with good integrity, advanced auditor with over 7 years working period with good integrity, and newly hired assistant auditor majored in statistics, business management or economy. Keeping "check and balance" concept was my main discipline in the process of forming validation team. I hoped a well-qualified leader could guide the team to good direction supported by experienced colleagues and new think-tank co-workers. I had significant objectives and goals for validation team, and one of them was developing 'authorization criteria' and 'validation methodology' in order to implement the AEO Program in Korea. I wanted to develop 'authorization criteria' and 'validation methodology' for implementing the AEO Program for the KCS. Of course, my final dream was to make the most valuable and exceptional AEO Program all over the world. We studied all kinds of relevant materials in six months. We read and discussed continuously, amongst others, the WCO SAFE FoS, International Organization



for Standardization (ISO) 9001, ISO 28000, Transported Asset Protection Association Freight Security Requirements (TAPA FSR), ISO Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 17712, International Ships and Port Facility Security (ISPS Code) and Safety of Life at SEA (SOLAS), and different AEO Programs, e.g. C-TPAT of the United States, PIP of Canada, AEO of EU, and Golden list Program of Jordan, Committee of Sponsoring Organization Model (COSO) Model, WCO Risk Management (RM) Guide, Trade Compliance RM Process of the United States, and RM of Australia, Focused Assessment (FA) and Import Self-Assessment (ISA) of the United States, Compliance Partnership Customs and Trade Model (COMPACT Model) of EU, Standardized Risk Assessments (SRAs) and general high-risk indicators of the WCO, ISO 14000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS).

Such repeatable work for long time gave us lots of stress, while we were motivated to develop a superb AEO Program. And finally, we made it. We invented a unique program in terms of the validation methodology and specific authorization criteria. When reviewing relevant materials, we found out that the most programs used qualitative evaluation methodology, which could only be marked as yes or no. We thought the qualitative evaluation of criteria was not enough to determine whether the Standards meet requirement or not. It had high possibility to be judged by subjective attitude. Although the TAPA FSR uses the quantitative methodology, we judged the methodology was not reasonable for applying to the AEO Program because of different authorization criteria between two programs. Unlike TAPA FSR, the criteria of the AEO Program needed to evaluate two kinds of characteristics, i.e. documentation and implementation. So, we developed a creative quantitative evaluation methodology to estimate the degree of documentation and implementation. We expected this methodology to evaluate the balance between documentation and implementation of criteria. The result has been successful. With respect to the authorization criteria, the WCO SAFE FoS presented the general requirements for the accredited AEO companies. So it's not easy to determine whether applied company could fulfill the requirements of the WCO SAFE FoS.



It is essential that we make detailed authorization criteria and discuss on ways of validation. When it comes to the financial viability requirements, the SAFE FoS said 'the AEO company has a good financial standing which is sufficient to fulfill its commitments with due

regard to the characteristics of the type of business activity', so that the KCS could determine whether the applying company has a good financial standing or not. We made specific criteria, which is 'a company has a good result of accounting auditing, and it shall maintain 200% or lower of average debt ratio of the same business type, or credit rating by independent credit rating organization maintaining qualified investment or above'. And then, we made specific guideline to judge whether the company meets such criterion or not, which is 'a company shall satisfy with at least one of the following conditions, ① Debt ratio is 200% or lower than that of the same business type average announced by Bank of Korea ② credit rating meets one of following certain levels ②-1 BBB- or higher (by company stock), ②-2 A3- or higher (by Commercial paper), ②-3 BBB- or higher (by Korea Enterprise Data, Korea Ratings, Korea Information Service), ②-4 Baa3 or higher (by Moody's), ②-5 BBB- or higher (by S&P), ②-6 BBB or higher (by Fitch)'. We applied this approach to every authorization criteria. When developing a Korean AEO Program, we stressed the importance of working together with private sector. We understood that the AEO Program would finally become a voluntary program. It couldn't have a success without participation of the businesses. Considering their opinions and suggestions, we set authorization criteria and evaluation methodology to allow them for flexibility and the customization of actions based on their business models. We developed meaningful and demonstrable benefits with them. As a result, quite large number of the business showed their keen interests in joining the AEO program in a short period.



Under this comprehensive experience and knowledge background, I have full self-confidence on the AEO Program. Whenever taking the AEO mission or seminar, I am able to provide practical solutions to the administrations in need of guidance and support, and also able to clearly explain the AEO scheme with theoretical and

practical business affairs. As a resource person, I attended the WCO Regional Workshop on AEO held in January 2010 in Kashiwa, Japan. I delivered the comprehensive experience on developing criteria, evaluation methodology, benefits, and so forth.

At that time there were not so many countries implementing the AEO Programs. Most participants were more focused on the understanding of the WCO SAFE FoS and getting experience of other WCO Members that have introduced the AEO programs. I tried to share

my experiences in the approach for launching the AEO Program with the workshop participants, who were interested in introducing the AEO Program during individual consultation session thereof. Some participants paid attention to my explanation, including a Mongolian participant, kept in touch with me after the workshop for asking further questions and seeking some advice. Now Mongolia is doing phase 1 process of the AEO Program. Mongolia will soon implement the full-fledged AEO Program. It is the moment when I felt a sense of accomplishment, watching tangible effects of my contribution to the regional; capacity building activities in this domain. I was also invited to the WCO National Seminar on AEO for Indonesia held in November 2011 in Bandung, Indonesia. When attending this workshop, I led exercise on the documentary and on-site validations. With my past experiences in joint on-site validations in the course of mutual recognition with the United States, Canada, Japan, Singapore, and New Zealand, I shared my expertise on the AEO Program with middle-class Customs managers who were responsible for the establishment of the AEO Program in Indonesia. Indonesia Customs was preparing to establish an AEO program by updating the existing compliance program, called "MITA" in 2011. I eagerly presented the process of how to evolve the Customs compliance program into the AEO Program. I showcased that the adoption of the AEO Program in Korea had brought diverse benefits to government, Customs administration and the business community. Happily, Indonesia implemented the AEO Program in 2015. It made my career with more glitter.

After then, I attended many relevant training events. I delivered the way to raise awareness on the AEO Program in the WCO AEO Global Conference held in April 2012 in Seoul, Korea, in which around 1,000 people from 97 countries attended. I shared my experience on validation skills with participants in Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) 2015 Capacity Building Workshop on Implementing Trade Facilitation Measures of the WTO TFA: AEO and National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) held in Wuhan, China. At the invitation of Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Secretariat, I attended the GTI Trade Facilitation Workshop 3 times, held in 2012, 2015, and 2017 respectively in Seoul, Korea. I took a facilitator role for group discussions on the AEO implementation, and had a leading role in responding to the various questions raised by the participants.



Now I would like to highlight my experiences in AEO training session in which I attended as a lecturer, namely: Capacity Building on AEO Program for Turkey held in July 2012 in Ankara,

Turkey; WCO Regional Workshop on SAFE FoS and AEO in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region held in June 2013 in Casablanca, Morocco; and Regional Workshop on AEO and MRA held in February 2018 in Seoul, Korea. In the event held in Turkey in 2012, I demonstrated site validation techniques and also explained trained the background of authorization criteria and validation methodology in 5 days. Sincerely it was my great honor that Turkey introduced the AEO Program in 2013 on completion of this Capacity Building, and then signed AEO MRA with Korea in 2014.

I attended Regional Workshop in MENA Region to support introduction of the AEO Program in this region and became a WCO Technical and Operational Advisor (TOA) in the AEO field. I took a role as a facilitator with a WCO representative for 5 days. I presented the WCO guidelines and share experiences in forming infrastructure, creating authorization criteria and evaluation methodology, and lectured the approach for the AEO mutual recognition. Furthermore, as a facilitator, I communicated continuously with 14 participants from 8 countries on the issue of faced challenges and solutions when introducing the AEO Program. Fortunately, I was accredited as a WCO TOA in the AEO field. Now 6 countries operate AEO Program in MENA Region, which are Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Morocco and Tunisia.

Recently, as a resource person I attended the Regional Workshop on AEO and MRA hosted by Korea Customs Service (KCS). I actively participated in all the discussions and exercises, inter alia; I co-led with the KCS colleagues the exercise for the on-site validation. I demonstrated techniques of validations, and explained the preparation and requirement for application, benefits of AEO program and advantages from AEO MRA. This kind of ‘mock site validation’ provided an opportunity to the workshop participants to obtain expertise in a practical aspect of what a site validation would be like. In this workshop, I felt it was no

wonder that the WCO Members would implement the AEO Program, just their upmost concern was an MRA negotiation, which could expand benefits to the AEO companies. I stressed the benefits private sector gained from the AEO Program, and how the Customs administration should arrange its limited resources efficiently in the AEO

initiative. I shared my experience and knowledge on the AEO MRA strategic approach and



joint validation skills with participants as well.

### **3. Next generation of the AEO (Forward to AEO MRA & Cooperation with OGAs)**

Time flew so fast. Already over 10 years has passed since the adoption of the WCO SAFE FoS. The WCO SAFE FoS has been updated 2 times. The first version in 2007 principally incorporated into its text-detailed provisions on the conditions and requirements for Customs and the AEO. The WCO wanted Customs and its business partners to access readily on all relevant materials in a single comprehensive instrument. Originally, the WCO SAFE FoS consists of 2 Pillars, which are Customs-Customs cooperation and Customs-Business partnership. The WCO started incorporating the AEO MRA and dealt with the issue on the other government agencies (OGAs) in 2010. In June 2010, the WCO issued its SAFE Package including ‘guidelines for developing a MRA’ in order to support implementation of the SAFE FoS. The second version published in 2012 included new parts 5 and 6 on Coordinated Border Management (CBM). The current version of 2015 focuses more on the MRA and cooperation with OGAs. It was added of a new Pillar 3 to foster closer cooperation between Customs and OGAs recognizing the needs of working together to cope with the challenges of supply chain security. The SAFE Package also includes ‘CBM Compendium’ and ‘Moving Air Cargo Globally (Air Cargo and Mail Secure Supply Chain and Facilitation Guidelines)’ which were issued jointly with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in order to deliver more detailed information on collaboration with the OGAs. In the current version of the SAFE Package, the WCO added ‘Customs AEO Validator Guide.’ This guide would help Members facilitate the mutual recognition negotiations and implementing relevant processes, through promoting a common approach to Customs AEO validation and applying working methods suited to the national, regional and international context.

The introduction of the AEO Program is inevitable in global trade arena. The number of countries that implemented the AEO Program last year seventy-three (73) and seventeen (17) countries will launch it very soon. Besides, already forty-seven (47) AEO MRAs were completed, followed by processing of 46 MRA negotiations. As you know, the TFA entered into force on 22 February 2017 following its ratification by two-thirds of the WTO membership. The article 7 of the TFA regulates ‘Trade facilitation measures for Authorized Operators’. The main essences of the WCO SAFE FoS were stipulated in this article. The full implementation of the TFA is estimated to reduce global trade costs by an average of 14.3%. Furthermore, the TFA is forecast to add up to 2.7% a year to the world’s export growth, and more than 0.5% a year to the world GDP growth over the 2015-30 horizon. Currently, lots of events have been held on the issue of exchanging best practices to implement the TFA

between public and private sector leaders. In this context, the next generation of the AEO Program would become ‘expansion of MRA and cooperation with the OGAs’. Through these evolutions, the Customs administration may outreach its Customs control to external countries, and speak on one single voice to private sector at the Customs border line. In terms of private sectors they will be able to enjoy more benefits of the AEO Program in this well-developed environment.

From my view, it is necessary for all related agencies to make same voice at the Customs Border. It is essential to reduce duplicated requirements and conditions to business community in global trade procedures. Accordingly, it should accompany cooperation among Customs Border Agencies. The next version of the WCO SAFE FoS has high possibility to be keen on strengthening Pillar 3 and the MRA contents towards favoring easier flow of trade goods across borders. I’m looking forward to next update of the WCO SAFE FoS, and also to watching marvelous evolution of AEO Program!



This article was entirely based on my personal opinion, and not represents official views of the WCO or the ROCB A/P. Any comments or suggestions are warmly welcomed. Please feel free to contact me for constructive dialogue at [johy@rocbap.org](mailto:johy@rocbap.org).

# **Customs Training Institute of Japan Customs (RTC Japan)**

## **was awarded by the President of Japan's National Personnel Agency!**

Contribution by Mr. Jun Tajima  
Director of International Cooperation Division,  
Japan Customs Training Institute

On 7 February 2018, the International Cooperation Division and Trainers of Customs Training Institute of Japan Customs, as known as "CTI" which is the RTC Japan, received the President's Award of Japan's National Personnel Agency (NPA).



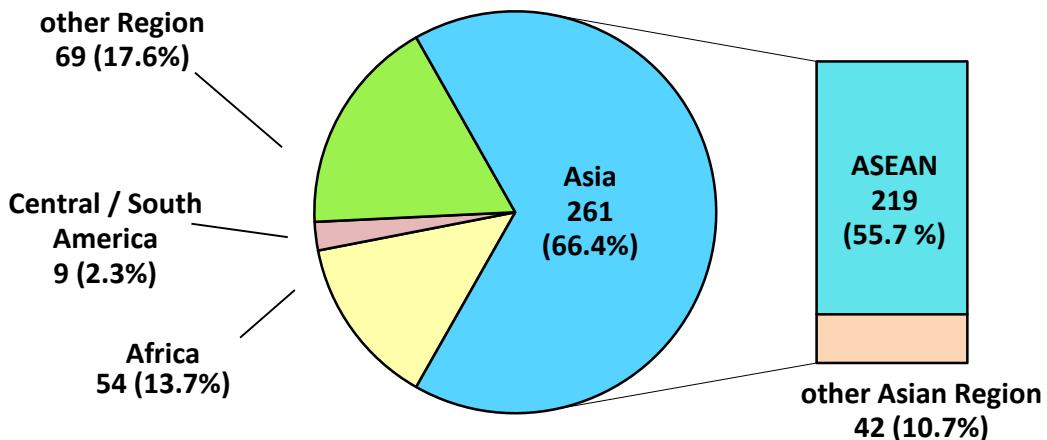
*The President of Japan's National Personnel Agency hands the Award over to Mr. Jun Tajima, Director of International Cooperation Division who serves as a representative of the CTI.*

The Award is to honor Japan's national public employees who have made outstanding contributions to strengthening people's reliance on the public service through their intrepid activities over many years among various duties at the Government of Japan. Following the award ceremony, the awardees have an audience with their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan.

The CTI was selected by the NPA Selection Committee taking into account (1) unremitting commitments of Customs technical cooperation activities under the Japan's official development assistance scheme for many years; and (2) great contributions for facilitating international trade and securing our society.

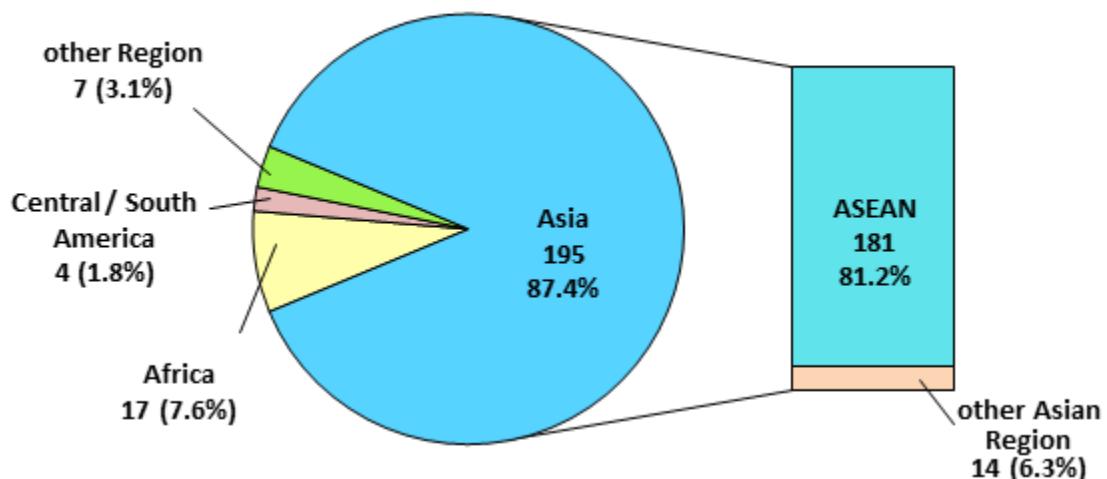
The CTI holds around 30 workshops on specific Customs issues for developing countries annually and it also hosts several WCO Regional Workshops as the RTC Japan in order to accommodate mounting capacity building needs in the AP Region. The CTI conducted its first capacity development assistance activities for developing countries, namely "Japan Customs Technical Cooperation Program" in 1970 and it will soon mark half a century.

Fact Sheet for Japan Customs' Technical Cooperation Programme (FY2016)



More than 6,500 participants since 1970

Number of participants for workshops in Japan (April 2016 – March 2017)



More than 2,300 experts sent since 1989

The CTI remains committed to support the efforts by developing countries as well as the AP region toward Customs modernization. One of the awardees, Mr. Daisuke Nagano, CTI trainer and WCO Accredited Expert on Risk Management who always actively participates in technical assistance activities, provided his experience in the involvement in these activities.

## My key effort in technical assistance activities

Daisuke Nagano,  
Trainer, Customs Training Institute, Japan

I always value face-to-face dialogue to provide most fruitful workshops. Japan Customs collects needs of the beneficiary Customs administrations in advance through various means,



(In a JICA mission to Vietnam Customs.  
The author is second from the left.)

including e-mails. However, it might be difficult to grasp the every detail of the needs through such indirect and electronic communication style. Therefore, in addition to prepared presentations based on the needs collected in advance, I spare much time on Q & A and discussion as far as time allows in my sessions. Such a face-to-face dialogue makes it easier to find out the detailed situations of these countries and challenges that they are facing. Based on

these situations and challenges, I usually discuss with the participants because, that way, we often come up with possible solutions, which are really practical and applicable in their own circumstances. As such, I make the most of the time sit together with the participants with discussion time that helps elicit their interests and questions.

### <The best part of technical assistance>

Technical assistance is a very rewarding activity for me because I can contribute a lot to the society. The presentations, advices and ideas generated through discussions bring the benefit to the participants and their home administrations. Then the Customs administrations' modernization will further advance and facilitate international trade, maintain proper revenue collection, and protect the society of those countries. Improved

trade environment will bring benefit to other countries, including Japan. Beyond the word of "Thank you" from the participants to the workshops themselves, I imagine further contribution to unnamed multitudinous people. It is really rewarding, isn't it?

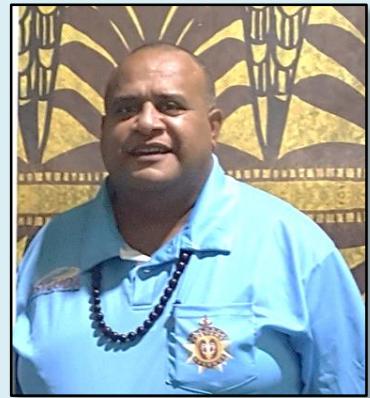


(In a WCO National Workshop for the Bhutan Customs Administration. The author is second from the left.)

For more information, please visit CTI webpage at [http://www.customs.go.jp/cti/top\\_eng.html](http://www.customs.go.jp/cti/top_eng.html)

# Customs Reform and Modernization in Vanuatu

Special Contribution by  
Mr. Benjamin Malas, Director  
Department of Customs & Inland Revenue of Vanuatu



The Vanuatu Customs division within the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue wishes to share some important insights of the success story it achieved through the reform and modernization in its administration for the last 5 years to date.

A project commenced in 2012 to re-write the existing Customs Act based on a model accepted by the Forum Island Ministers. The re-written Act became law in December 2013 and brought with it a number of features consistent with global best practice for customs legislation. Customs now provided legally binding Advanced Rulings on matters pertaining to tariff classification, valuation and origin. The role of customs brokers was also more defined and a licensing process, including qualifying exams properly identified. Cargo facilitation was also improved by the ability for customs to take securities for cargo consignments which were subject to dispute. This allows importers to take delivery of their cargo and the matter under dispute resolved later, rather than delaying the delivery while the matter continues to be contested.

Since July 2014, the upgraded, a web based system ASYCUDA World provides live data, enabling Vanuatu Customs for performance measurement in real time, thus improving risk assessment. The system has increased capabilities for accounting, post-clearance audit, statistics and information management. Easier aggregation of data at regional and international levels contributes to better and faster economic decision-making. The system insures the complete coverage of the clearance process and includes the built-in capability to support national specific requirements and/or frequent regulation changes

In May 2017, Vanuatu Customs commissioned the Asian Development Bank to conduct a Time Release Survey, which identifies and measures the time taken for every transaction from the arrival of ship or aircraft to the delivery of cargo at the importers premises. This process is used to identify impediments to cargo delivery so that improvements can be made to

facilitation rates. The data from this survey will be used as base line data for future surveys which will be conducted annually.

On the 1st of December 2017, Customs assumed responsibility of the Immigration passenger processing function at air and sea ports. This was a major addition to Custom's responsibilities, and was the catalyst for our front line officers now being titled Border Security Officers as they control the flow of goods and people across our borders. There was substantial training undertaken, provided by the Vanuatu Immigrations Service, New Zealand Customs, and Australian Border Force.

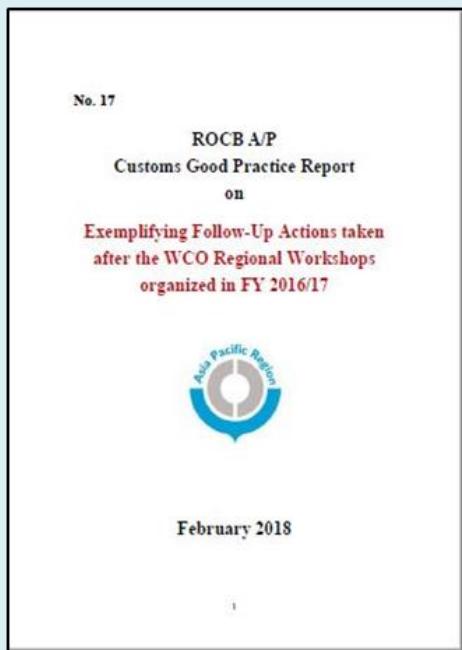
In 2018, Vanuatu will become a contracting party to the HS, the only Forum Island country besides Fiji and PNG to do so. In 2018, Vanuatu will also become a contracting party to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonisation of Customs Procedures (a.k.a. Revised Kyoto Convention). Being an RKC Contracting Party gives traders and other stakeholders inside and outside the country's economy a firm message that the Vanuatu government promotes and maintains efficient and modern Customs procedures consistent with international standards, and ensures that legitimate trade is facilitated without compromising the Customs controls function. 2018 will also see the delivery of whole container x-ray technology, donated by the Chinese Government, providing Customs with the capability of conducting non-intrusive inspections of containers for prohibited and restricted goods.



In just a few years, Vanuatu Customs have achieved a number of ground breaking reforms, and assumed new responsibilities, while continuing to be in the vanguard of modernization. The momentum created by the Customs Reform and Modernization Committee, chaired by the Director DCIR and attended by The Deputy Director Customs, Managers and the Technical Adviser, has filtered down to all levels of the organisation and our stakeholders have been the beneficial recipients of these initiatives.

More detailed information about the reform and modernization that Vanuatu Customs has been going through is now available in their official [website](#) or contact Mr. George R. Pakoa, Acting Deputy Director Customs at [gpakoa@vanuatu.gov.vu](mailto:gpakoa@vanuatu.gov.vu).

# Customs Good Practice Report No. 17 on Exemplifying Regional Workshop Follow-Up Actions in 2016/17



The WCO continuously discusses the way for achieving result-oriented capacity building delivery. In line with it, the ROCB A/P has conducted its Regional Workshop Follow-Up Action Surveys since 2015. In February 2018, the ROCB A/P published the Customs Good Practice Report No. 17 on Exemplifying Follow-Up Actions after Participation in the Regional Workshops organized in the FY2016/17 (July 2016 – June 2017), which is the third round of the continued ROCB A/P's initiative for optimizing the effects of the regional capacity building assistance activities in the A/P region.

The latest survey revealed that the common follow-up actions include, among others, the submission of their reports to the management and the sharing of distributed training materials with their colleagues. However, it also revealed that not all participants filed their reports to their managers, or shared workshop materials within the administrations. The ROCB A/P strongly recommends that the workshop participants should be required to submit their reports to the managers in the right time manner as the minimal follow-up action, in context of institutionalize the lessons learned. It is quite encouraging to have found that 65% of the replies indicated that the participants observed direct effects from application of the lessons learned at the managerial and operational levels. Likewise, 65% of the replies confirmed that the participation in the workshop in FY2016/17 have resulted in initiating such modernization projects. These modernization projects may not be new initiatives, but the lessons learned from the workshops complement on-going reform and modernization projects.

A copy of the Good Practice Report No. 17 can be downloaded from the ROCB A/P's webpage at:

[http://www.rocb-ap.org/file\\_media/file\\_document/GoodPracticeReports/ROCB%20AP%20Custom%20Good%20Practice%20Report%20No17%20Exmeplifying%20Foll.pdf](http://www.rocb-ap.org/file_media/file_document/GoodPracticeReports/ROCB%20AP%20Custom%20Good%20Practice%20Report%20No17%20Exmeplifying%20Foll.pdf)

# Workshops and Meetings

## ROCB A/P participates in the UNESCAP Capacity Building Workshop on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation



20-23 March 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

At the invitation of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Mr. Hong-Young Jo of the ROCB A/P attended the Capacity Building Workshop on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation: Implications of Emerging Technologies held from 20 to 23 March 2018 at the UN Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand. Approximately 80 representatives from private and public sectors, relevant international and government agencies participated in the Workshop.

The Workshop focused on the implication of emerging technologies, e.g. block chain, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), big data, etc. At the special training session, Mr. Jo introduced the ROCB A/P's main missions and WCO's capacity building activities related to trade facilitation, and those pertinent contributions towards creation of an enabling paperless trade environment was mentioned by couples of speakers and the UNESCAP Secretariat.

This event provided the participants with a good knowledge-building opportunity on emerging technologies. Participants shared their perspectives on the opportunities of applying advanced Information and Communication Technologies and facilitating Single Window interoperability in advancing regional economic cooperation. The Workshop also discussed the possible way to overcome issues and challenges in trade data exchange.

# **ROCB A/P speaks at the Regional Seminar for OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products**



**21 March 2018, Bangkok, Thailand**

The World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) organized a Regional Seminar for OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products on 20-22 March 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Some 30 delegates from the OIE's A/P regional Member authorities attended the Seminar and Ms. Saori Nojima, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, took part in and spoke at a session on 21 March 2018 as one of the resource speakers.

Illegal veterinary medicines were one of the topics discussed in the Seminar and Ms. Nojima explained how Customs administrations have been tackling illegally traded pharmaceutical products and trafficking of counterfeit medicines at the borders. In this regard, she underlined the importance of collaboration and cooperation between competent animal health authorities and Customs administrations at international, regional and national levels respectively. Her message was well received by the Seminar participants and led to the discussion on possible way forward towards cooperation to suppress illegal trafficking of veterinary medicines.

# WCO Regional Workshop on Anti-money Laundering and Terrorism Financing



12-15 March 2018, Sydney, Australia

The WCO Regional Workshop on Anti-money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing was held on 12-15 March 2018 in Sydney, Australia, under the sponsorship of Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). The Workshop was organized in cooperation with the Australia Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Border Force (ABF), the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) and the ROCB A/P. A total of 32 Customs officials representing 25 WCO A/P regional Member administrations participated in the Workshop and facilitators from the WCO Secretariat and the ABF respectively led the sessions. Ms. Saori Nojima, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, also attended as one of the facilitators of the Workshop.

In the Workshop, initiatives and practices on anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing at the respective international, regional and national platforms were explained and discussed. In addition to the international initiatives, such as the WCO's efforts and activities on the said area, representatives from the APG added explanations on its regional commitments to push forward implementation of the Financial Action Task Force's Recommendations thereof. Regarding the national practices, speakers from agencies playing pivotal roles on anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing in Australia namely, the ABF, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australian Transaction Report and Analysis Center (AUSTRAC) added value by sharing their experiences. Furthermore, several participants were also invited to share their respective national practices in implementing international best practices. Panel discussions and practical exercises using hypothetical scenarios as well as site visits to the ABF facilities and Counter Terrorism Unit were

also arranged.

The workshop provided a platform for establishing a network among the participants. The participants showed their appreciation to the Australia Department of Home Affairs and the ABF for the Workshop arrangement and their hospitality. They also thanked all the speakers, the WCO, the APG, the ROCB A/P, and the CCF/Japan for their contribution and support for the Workshop.

## Capacity Building Committee discusses Performance Management and Professional Developments



26 -28 February 2018, Brussels, Belgium

The 9th Session of the WCO Capacity Building Committee (CBC) was convened on 26 – 28 February 2018 at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. More than 250 delegates from the WCO Members, development partners and academia participated and discussed the performance measurement and professional development under the theme of “Smart Customs: The Gateway to High Performance and Sustainability” and heard the report by the WCO Secretariat on a number of programs and initiatives. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, and his colleagues participated in the Session. Conclusion of the 13th Global Meeting of the Heads of the ROCBs, RTCs and Vice Chairs’ Offices was also reported. In the course of the work progress report, in response to a question raised by Member delegates on the necessity of assessing the capacity building outcomes, Mr. Igarashi introduced the ROCB A/P’s initiative in the “Workshop Follow-up Actions Survey” and offered to collaborate with the Secretariat for

better monitoring of the benefits of the capacity building investments. His intervention was echoed by the Secretariat and referred as a good practice.

Seizing this opportunity of visiting the WCO Headquarters, Mr. Igarashi and his colleagues, along with a representative from the A/P regional Vice Chair office, paid a courtesy visit to the Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, and briefly reported the ongoing collaboration between the Regional Vice Chair and the ROCB A/P, especially in developing the Regional Strategic Plan as well as the ROCB A/P's work on research and dissemination of the region's good practices. Secretary General expressed his appreciation to the Vice Chair and ROCB A/P for their hard work and careful coordination among the A/P WCO Members and gave his kind words of encouragement for continuous furthering in capacity building support in the A/P region.

## **ROCB A/P reports recent activities at the 15th A/P Regional Training Center Heads Meeting**



23 February 2018, Brussels, Belgium

On the occasion of the 13th Global Meeting of the Heads of the Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs), Regional Training Centers (RTCs) and the Vice Chairs' Offices, the ROCB A/P convened the 15th Meeting of the Heads of the WCO A/P Regional Training Centers on 23 February 2018 at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. Delegations from 6 RTCs, namely Fiji, Hong Kong China, India, Japan, Korea and Malaysia, as well as representatives of the WCO Secretariat and the A/P Regional Vice Chair's Office (Fiji) attended.

At the Meeting, Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P welcomed the delegates and thanked the RTCs for their support and cooperation for the planning and delivery of the regional capacity building activities. He then reported its activities since the last RTC Heads Meeting held in December 2016 in Hong Kong China and introduced recently published Customs Good Practice Reports, including the Report on the Exemplifying Regional Workshop

## Follow-Up Actions.

RTC Heads complimented the ROCB A/P for the findings of the significant impacts accrued from the regional workshops in various forms and stressed the needs for the good technical assistance needs analysis and choice of relevant workshop topics. Dr. Tong Hua, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, also introduced his study findings on the development and the use of national e-learning module for effective national Customs training delivery. RTC Heads welcomed the study and exchanged their experiences in the use of distance learning platform, including the WCO's CLiKC! and made some suggestions to enrich the study. Ms. Eva Suen, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, also introduced the summary of the Customs Good Report on Cyber Investigation and Digital Forensics, which was compiled as a outcome of the Regional Workshop held in November 2017 in Hong Kong China. She thanked the contribution made by administrations of Hong Kong China, Australia and Malaysia for the Report. RTC Heads welcomed the ROCB A/P's initiative in supporting the regional Members to contend with this complicated technical forensic issue. Draft Workshop program on Human Resource Development to be held in April 2018 in Hanoi, Vietnam, was briefly introduced and the RTCS were invited to take part in to share their experiences in innovating training and human resource development approaches. Next Meeting will be held later 2018 in Shanghai, China.

## ROCB A/P discusses the regional good practices at the 13th Global ROCBs-RTCs-Vice Chairs' Offices



22-23 February 2018, Brussels, Belgium

The WCO Convened the 13th Global Meeting of the Heads of the Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs), the Regional Training Centers (RTCs) and Vice Chairs' Offices on 22 and 23 February 2018 at its Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, which was attended by some 30 delegates from the ROCBs, RTCs and Vice Chairs' Offices around the world. The Meeting discussed, among others, the contribution of the WCO's regional structures (i.e. ROCBs and RTCs) to the implementation of the WCO Strategic Plan, the regional best practices guidance,

and review and update of the PICARD Professional Standards.



Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P joined the panel discussion and explained the A/P region's practices in translating the WCO Strategic Plan into tactical and operational levels, highlighting the ROCB A/P's approaches in developing its Annual Work Plan and its initiatives in evaluating the impacts of the regional workshops. He stressed the importance of the technical assistance needs analysis so that the planning of the regional capacity building activities would better accommodate the regional Members' needs and priorities.

ROCBs discussed the collection and management of regional and national data during their break-out discussion session. The Meeting also provided the participants with the latest development in the various works undertaken by the respective Directorates of the WCO Secretariat.

## **WCO Regional Workshop on Authorized Economic Operators and Mutual Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements**



5-9 February 2018, Seoul, Korea

The WCO, in cooperation with the ROCB A/P and Korea Customs Service (KCS), organized the WCO Regional Workshop on Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) and Mutual Recognition Agreements/Arrangements (MRA) from 5 February to 9 February 2018 in Seoul, Korea, under the financial support of Customs Cooperation Fund of Korea (CCF/Korea) to support the implementation of the AEO programs and achievement of the MRA negotiations in the A/P region.

23 participants from 20 regional Member administrations, 5 resource persons and 7 supporting officials for conducting mock exercise of on-site validation, attended in this workshop. Mr. Hong-Young Jo of the ROCB A/P attended this workshop as one of the resource persons, and made a presentation on the ROCB A/P's contributions and activities for capacity building.

The workshop provided the platform for dynamic discussion on different aspects of the AEO programs and the MRAs. The workshop started with the basics, namely: why SAFE FoS was born; what is required for an AEO program; what are the common challenges faced at the implementation stage and how to solve them; and what are the next steps to achieve an MRA, among others. One day was set aside for a KCS-led 'mock validation exercise' at an AEO company. The aim was to provide an opportunity to all participants to demonstrate how a validation is conducted and the business' voices on actual benefits gained.

Through this 5-day workshop, the participants actively took part in all the discussions and exercises and shared their views on their possible steps for their administration to materialize the lessons learned from the workshop. The workshop was successfully concluded with the participants' clear recognition of common challenges and possible solutions relating to the promotion of the AEO programs and possibility for a multilateral AEO MRA.

The regional Members are proud of being an AEO engine centre considering the implementation number of the operational AEO programs and MRAs in the region, namely twelve (12) operational AEO programs to-date, four (4) programmes being developed, forty-three (43) MRAs signed with twenty-three (23) additional MRAs being negotiated.

## **ROCB A/P and KCS sign MOU on a short-term attachment program**



1 February 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ROCB A/P and the Korea Customs Service (KCS) on cooperation regarding a short-term attachment program was signed on 1 February. Mr. Taeil Kang, Director General of Information and International Affairs Bureau

signed on behalf of KCS, while Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB AP, countersigned.

Speaking at the brief signing ceremony, Mr. Kang reiterated that this MOU did not signal the mere start of a relationship between the ROCB A/P and the KCS, but rather the cementing a long existing collaborative relationship. He emphasized the KCS's commitment to the successful implementation of the MOU.

Speaking in turn, Mr. Igarashi agreed that this MOU would add more impetus to an already existing relationship. He stressed that as the international cooperation field has become enormous, it was necessary to take advantage of sharing the different knowledge/experience for the benefit of AP region. Mr. Igarashi also acknowledged the KCS' continued championship of the WCO capacity building activities.

Mr. Kang and his KCS colleagues were escorted by Mr. Igarashi to water the "ROCB A/P's trees" which were planted in commemoration of the ROCB A/P's 10th Anniversary ceremony held in 2014.

## **ROCB A/P attends the Stakeholder meeting for a strengthen Regional Enforcement Network (REN) for Chemicals and Waste**



1 February 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

On 1 February 2018, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) hosted the stakeholders meeting on a proposal for a strengthened Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste in the UN Conference Center in Bangkok, Thailand. At the Meeting, the UNEP reviewed major achievements in the past 5 years (2012-2017) accomplished through a series of activities by Regional Enforcement Network (REN) and pointed out the persistent challenges and sustainable development goals.

Around 20 delegates including the ones from Customs administrations of China, Korea and Thailand, as well as representatives from the ROCB A/P, the RILO A/P, and other partner organizations such as the Interpol and the UNODC, attended the Meeting. Delegates had a constructive meeting with an interactive dialogue on the topic of illegal trade in chemicals and hazardous wastes and associated negative impacts on human health and the environment. The meeting applied a so-called “problem and solution tree method” to conclude the brain storming outcomes from each participant. During the meeting, Dr. Tong Hua, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P and Mr. Poonyawee SROYTHONG, Program Coordinator of the ROCB A/P shared their views on the significance of the coordinated border management, risk profiling of environmental cargos and advanced customs clearance system for an efficient customs control, introduced the upcoming WCO Regional Workshop on Environmental topics in Shanghai, and highlighted the commitment of the ROCB A/P’s tailor-made capacity building activities for increasing the awareness and skills of frontline customs officers.

## **ROCB A/P joins the Fiji colleagues for the International Customs Day Ceremony**



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January 2018, Suva, Fiji

At the invitation of Mr. Visvanath Das, Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, joined the International Customs Day ceremony held at the FRCS Headquarters in Suva, Fiji, as chief guest. Nearly 100 FRCS officials attended the Ceremony. Given that the day coincided with the last day of the WCO Regional Workshop on Accreditation of Mercator Program Advisors being held at the Regional Training Center in the FRCS Headquarter, the facilitators and participants to the Workshop were also invited to join the FRCS colleagues for the event.

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Following the introduction of the master of ceremony, Mr. Igarashi made a key note speech, in which he referred to the WCO's 2018 yearly theme, "A secure business environment for economic development" and stressed the ever-expanding Customs' roles in championing the sound growth of international trade and supply chain security. He also highlighted the imperative needs for international cooperation and Customs-stakeholder collaboration to this end. He then presented the certificates of merit to some of the FRCS officials for their outstanding performance in various areas of Customs operations on behalf of the WCO. He also joined Mr. Das and other WCO Workshop facilitators to cut a cake symbolizing the official launch the 2018 theme at the FRCS.



## **ROCB A/P promotes Customs Academic Research at International Network of Customs Universities (INCU) Seminar**



22-26 January 2018, Baku, Azerbaijan

At the invitation of International Network of Customs Universities (INCU) Secretariat, Dr. Tong Hua, ROCB A/P Program Manager, participated in the International Academic Seminar held at the ROCB European Building from 22 January to 26 January 2018 in Baku, Azerbaijan. In the opening session of the seminar, Dr. Tong was appointed as a member of the Board of Advisers for "The Journal of Customs and Economics Review" (JCER), which is a newly published

international academic journal on Customs Matters. The Seminar was attended by professors and students from the Northwest Management Institute of the Russian Federation, Beijing International Business and Economics University of China, as well as Academy of State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan State Economic University and Baku Higher Oil School.



Dr. Tong moderated and spoke at the one-day session on the Customs modernization practice and Customs leadership, in which he highlighted the strategy of the WCO and the capacity building activities of the ROCB A/P. He also made an analysis on the global environment and best practices of Customs Modernizations in A/P Region, and further discussed the role of leadership in change management.

In the course of his mission, Dr. Tong visited the Academy of State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan, Baku Higher Oil School and WCO Regional Dog Training Center. He was invited to deliver a lecture on "the global Comparison of Customs Modernization and Customs Higher Education Benchmarking Methods " for the 3rd year students of the Law faculty of the Academy. State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan reported the related events, please refer to the below links respectively:

[http://:customs.gov.az/az/faydali/xeberler/2445\\_/](http://:customs.gov.az/az/faydali/xeberler/2445_/)

[http://:customs.gov.az/en/faydali/xeberler/2451\\_/](http://:customs.gov.az/en/faydali/xeberler/2451_/)

## **WCO Regional Workshop on Accreditation of Mercator Program Advisors in the A/P region**



WCO A/P Regional Workshop on the Accreditation of Mercator Program Advisors (MPAs) was held at the WCO Regional Training Center in Suva, Fiji, on 22- 26 January 2018 with funding support of the Korea Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Korea). Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, participated in this Workshop as a facilitator, along with two facilitators from the WCO Secretariat.

MPAs are a specialized Customs Modernization Advisor (CMA) category with the skills and the knowledge to assist the WCO Members with implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) at a strategic level, including provision of advice and guidance on gap analysis, development of strategic roadmap and action plans, and guidance and mentoring towards implementing trade facilitation reforms and modernizing processes.

14 Customs officers from 12 Member administrations in the A/P region, whose professional profiles were assessed and regarded suitable for the Program requirements, participated in this Accreditation Workshop as candidates. 4 representatives from Oceania Customs Organization joined the exercise as part of the WCO's outreaching initiatives. The candidates from the Member administrations were assessed against the required MPA profile through a series of simulation exercises, presentations, role-plays, group activities and plenary discussions. In addition, given that the MPAs are to represent the WCO for the Mercator Program, they were also required to demonstrate their knowledge and strategic application of core WCO standards, tools and instruments as well as the WTO TFA along with their potential to facilitate discussion with senior Customs officials in a strategic context.

The Candidates who successfully demonstrated and proved their qualifications were considered pre-accredited and, as the second phase of the accreditation process, will be invited to an in-country mission as co-facilitators to further assess their competence to be fully accredited MPAs.

# FUTURE ACTIVITIES

## WCO A/P CB/TA Programs and Meetings Schedule

### April 2018 and onwards (Indicative)

(NB) Official invitation will be circulated in due course

Event	Dates	Venue
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Customs Analytical Technology	17-19 Apr. 2018	Busan, Korea
◆ WCO National Workshop on TRS for Myanmar	23-27 April 2018	Yangon, Myanmar
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Accreditation of Single Window Experts	23-27 Apr. 2018	Xiamen, China
◆ WCO regional Workshop on Environmental Issues	23-27 Apr. 2018	Shanghai, China
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Human Resource Development	24-27 Apr. 2018	Ha Noi, Vietnam
◆ WCO Sub-regional Workshop on SAFE and AEO for Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga	7-11 May 2018	tbd, Papua New Guinea.
◆ A/P Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference	14-17 May 2018	Nadi, Fiji
◆ WCO National Workshop on Customs Laboratory for Cambodia	21-25 May 2018	Phnom Penh, Cambodia
◆ WCO National Workshop on PCA for Bhutan	4-8 Jun. 2018	tbd, Bhutan
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Compliance and Enforcement Package	11-15 Jun. 2018	Nagoya, Japan
◆ Oceania Customs Organization Annual Meeting	11-14 Jun. 2018	Melbourne, Australia
◆ WCO Council Sessions	28-30 Jun. 2018	Brussels, Belgium
◆ WCO Sub-regional Workshop on IPR for ASEAN	9-12 Jul. 2018	Langkawi, Malaysia

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