



**ROCB**  
Asia/Pacific

**World Customs Organization**

**E-Newsletter No.69**

# FOREWORD



Dear Readers,

Thank you for your time reading this 69th ROCB A/P E-Newsletter.

First of all, regrettably, I must touch up COVID-19 in this foreword again. As I write, we are still facing difficult time due to the significant and historical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It goes without saying that, COVID-19 has seen a major change to our way of life, especially on our public health and economy. The situation remains uncertain, and anxiety surrounds us. As you aware, we, Customs were required to respond quickly to COVID-19 and our efforts to address those challenges are ongoing.

As the Head of ROCB, dedicated training organization of WCO, I realize again how important Customs training is and the necessity to develop outstanding Customs officials who can respond effectively, professionally and quickly to these challenges are. From the perspective of the training, the WCO headquarters and A/P Members have not stopped, and considerable efforts are being made by A/P Members to establish what can be done to ensure our efforts continue throughout situation including hosting online Conferences and Webinars. I would like to express my deepest appreciation for those efforts.

Of course, ROCB A/P hasn't stopped either. We are also focusing on Publication and Information sharing, which is one of the main functions of ROCB A/P. We have published ROCB A/P Good Practice Report which summarizes the Asia Pacific Member's Best Practices. We also produce the Special Essays which explain WCO tools and associated hot topics in an easy-to-understand manner and publishes in the ROCB A/P quarterly E-Newsletter. We sincerely hope that ROCB A/P Publications will be good reference tools not only for policy officials but also field officers.

This E-Newsletter features our activities undertaken in the second quarter of 2020, i.e. April through June 2020. In this E-Newsletter, We include five special contribution articles from Asia Pacific Members and WCO headquarters, namely (1) the learning innovation under the current

COVID-19 situation by Indonesia Customs, (2) the recent activities on the promoting international cooperation by Iran Customs, (3) Encouragement message for A/P Members and ROCB A/P under the current COVID-19 situation from RTC Japan, (4) the launching of the Customs E-Chatbot named “Mr. Arkorn” by Thai Customs and (5) Greeting message and introduction of WCO Regional Development Manager (RDM) for Asia Pacific region from Mr. Takashi Sato, WCO. I am very appreciative of these administrations for sharing their recent activities and messages.

In addition, there are five Special Essays by Program Managers of ROCB A/P. Namely, (1) the ROCB A/P Study Report on the WCO Mercator Programs practices in the Asia Pacific region for further trade facilitation by Ms. Saori Nojima, (2) briefing ROCB A/P 's functions with the summarizing 3 year work experience at ROCB A/P by Ms. Saori Nojima as the last article posted during her tenure, (3) the ROCB A/P Study Report on Digital Analytics by Mr. Ilkwon Han based on his work experience on the Digital Analytics area, (4) guiding the WCO COVID-19 dedicated HP by Ms. Chloe AU and (5) the brief introduction of the ROCB A/P Good Practice Report No. 22 on Integrity which will be issued in August 2020 by Dr. Ton Hua.

As for ROCB A/P's activities articles, I would like to touch on one deep-moving article for us, Farewell message from Ms. Saori Nojima, who was CCF/Japan Operational Manager and Program Manager of ROCB A/P. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my deepest appreciation again for “Saori-san”, Ms. Saori Nojima for her tireless efforts and great outstanding contribution to our activities. She always made a detailed and significant contribution toward our work her commitment, energy and enthusiasm were motivating. I would really appreciate it if you could join with me thanking for Ms. Saori Nojima for everything she did during her tenure at ROCB A/P. But I don't want to say “SAYONARA”, because I strongly believe that Members of the Asia Pacific region and ROCB A/P will have opportunities to work with Saori-san again in the near future.

The ROCB A/P is always 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 the regional Member Customs administrations. I would like to continue to report not only ROCB A/P's activities but also Members' interesting activities through our E-Newsletters.

Kind regards,

Handwritten signature in Japanese characters: 倉本智和 (Norikazu Kuramoto).

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

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# How COVID-19 Provides an Opportunity in Learning Innovation: the Indonesian Customs and Excise Education and Training Center (ICEETC-Pusdiklat BC) Way

The screenshot displays the HLC (KEMENKEU LEARNING CENTER) website interface. The main navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'KNOWLEDGE CENTER', 'COURSES', 'COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE', and 'CONTACT US'. The course page for 'E-Learning DJBC: Narkotika dan Pengawasannya' is shown, featuring a course card with a dog and rider image, a 'TAKE THIS COURSE' button, and a '517 STUDENTS ENROLLED' indicator. The course description states it is an open access e-learning for PNS in the Ministry of Finance. A banner below the course asks 'Apakah Anda Sudah Melakukan Update Biodata Profil Semantik?'. The instructor details section identifies the course as being provided by Pusdiklat Bea Cukai. Social media sharing icons and a curriculum link are also visible.

\*Kemenkeu = Ministry of Finance

The beginning of 2020 will always be remembered for a long time. The COVID-19 pandemic forced all of us to change our custom and habit, including the way we conduct training. We are required to organize capacity building activities that heed the protocol to prevent and countermeasure of COVID-19. Technology and internet are the solution.

Pusdiklat BC already had a roadmap which were established before this pandemic. On 2018, Pusdiklat BC established a roadmap which contain the strategy to switch from classical training to e-learning. According to the roadmap, Pusdiklat BC aimed to organize 30 percent of its training in the form of e-learning on 2019, 50 percent on 2020, and finally 70 percent on 2021. We realized that this is inevitable. Technology revolution, the increasing roles of customs beyond the border, limited resources, and few other factors lead us to the fact that e-learning is the future learning method. There's no such thing as impossible in this time, when a surgery can be guided online! Nevertheless, we realize that customs trainings are loaded with many in-field practices. The 30 percent portion of classical training in the end of the roadmap is allocated for trainings which

contain in-field practices. By the end of the day, there will be no theoretical lectures in classical training. Classical trainings mean practical and simulation trainings.

This pandemic situation, none other than, accelerates the accomplishment of the roadmap. The situation forced all stakeholder to realize that e-learning, once again, is the future learning method. Moreover, according to the 70:20:10 Model for Learning and Development (created by Morgan McCall, Michael M. Lombardo, and Robert A. Eichinger in the 1980s), individuals obtain only 10 percent of their learning (knowledge, skill, and attitude) from formal educational events such as training. The most beneficial for individuals or employees is learning by doing or hands-on experience which contribute the 70 percent and the 20 percent comes from learning from others, that include coaching, mentoring, social learning, collaborative learning and similar other methods. Thereby, the challenge for a modern training institution is to cultivate an organizational culture so that all employees are willingly and consciously fulfill their needs of competency development through all the three methods. In short, to grow a learning organization.

During this pandemic, Pusdiklat BC had also launched several open access e-learnings and microlearnings. The goal is to provide an access for non-customs officers to learn about customs-related matters. The programs are Customs Act e-Learning, Excise Act e-Learning, Dual-Used Chemical Microlearning, The Supervision of Narcotics by Customs e-Learning, General Import Procedures e-Learning, Passenger Goods Import Procedures e-Learning, and Post and Parcel Goods Import Procedures e-Learning, to name a few. The ultimate outcomes are to give trainees a comprehensive understanding on the correct customs procedures and to ease them when interact with customs officers. Educating the stakeholders of customs is not less important than to train the customs officers and through this open access e-learning, Pusdiklat BC grabbed such role.

## Iran Customs is Promoting the Cooperation with neighborhood Customs included Video Conference

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) shared that they have promoted the cooperation with neighborhood Customs administration. Dr. Mahdi Mirashrafi, the President of IRICA and their top management officials have 10 high level meetings during April to July 2020 including video conference and discussed various cooperation matters included the land border facilitation measures under the COVID-19 circumstances as below.

1. Video conference with the Deputy and Director of  
International Customs Office of Azerbaijan

27April 2020



2. Holding a video conference between the General Director of Customs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the General Director of Customs of Turkey

04 May 2020



3. Attendance at the trilateral meeting of the Ministers of Roads and Urban Development and Customs between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

12 May 2020



4. Holding a video conference by the General Director of Customs of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Chairman of the Revenue Committee of Armenia

13May2020



5. A virtual meeting between the General Director of IRICA with the heads of the Customs Department of Georgia

2020May13



6. A virtual meeting between the General Directorate of IRICA  
With the Head of Pakistan Customs

2020May13



7. Meeting with the Ambassador of Afghanistan

2020 June 14



8. Meetings with the Deputy Minister of Customs of Afghanistan

2020 June 22



9. Participation in the virtual meeting of the council

2020 July 26



10. Holding the third national working group of Eurasia in Iran's customs  
2020 July 14



## ROCB A/P received Encouragement Message from the RTC Japan

4 June 2020, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. IKEDA Kagemitsu, Managing Director of Customs Training Institute (CTI), the Ministry of Finance Japan as the RTC Japan, expresses encouragement message for the ROCB A/P and A/P Members to tackle together on the current tough situation caused by COVID-19. In addition, the CTI shares the most recent training initiative on Human Rescoring Development (HRD) to respond the current environment. His original message as below.

### Encouragement Message for the ROCB and AP Members from the RTC Japan



IKEDA Kagemitsu  
Managing Director  
Customs Training Institute (CTI)  
The Ministry of Finance Japan

Dear ROCB and AP Members,

Today, on behalf of the CTI, I would like to convey our encouragement message to the ROCB and all AP Members as capacity building family for tackling the tough times caused by COVID-19.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 infection in the world, we all have been seen unexpected world and facing huge challenges namely international people movement have stopped and related border processes have been also greatly affected. At the same time, maximum consideration must be given to ensuring the safety of Customs officials and maintaining ordinary Customs operations by our Customs administration. Nevertheless, we are very pleased that we recognized that the ROCB

and AP Members have made various efforts such as the introduction of hygiene measures and the remote work. I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and professionalism of the ROCB and AP Members.

As a training dedicated institute, the CTI once again strongly recognized the importance of maintaining and improving the Customs officials' knowledge and capacity to appropriately respond to these situations as an indispensable organization that supports national economic activity and social safety and security. Also, from global aspect, Customs modernization is still important for us. Therefore, the CTI as the RTC Japan shows its strong commitment to continue to cooperate with the ROCB and AP Members by sharing our experiences and giving lectures about Customs matter.

This time the CTI introduced a new way of training, namely home-based on-line training, for newly recruited Customs officials. This means the transition to a new training way in line with the new lifestyle led by COVID-19. Therefore, the COVID-19 infection control measure is a game-changer, as it were. I would like to share our recent initiatives to avoid COVID-19 infection in terms of induction training for newly recruited Customs officials as follows.

The Japan Customs has three main missions: namely, realizing a safe and secure society; collecting duties and taxes appropriately and in a fair manner; and further facilitating legitimate trade and travel. Besides, we are responsible for a wide range of undertakings. As our missions and responsibilities are intertwined and they are getting more complicated than ever, the Japan Customs provides various kinds of training programs, which are layered and designed according to the level of the personal skills, including the induction training for newly recruited Customs officials. Thanks to the broadly recognized Customs functions and its responsibilities in addressing such prominent national challenges as proper clearance of rapidly increasing in-bound passengers and counter-terrorism, as well as high-level political buy-in thereof, the number of newly recruited Customs officials has been increasing accordingly in recent years. There is an imperative need for these new recruits to study the functions undertaken by the Customs and the powers granted in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, as well as theories and techniques relating to its missions. In this regard, the CTI develops a comprehensive curriculum including practicum to be provided by the CTI lecturers, as well as academic classes provided by other experts.

The Japan Customs planned to commence the afore-mentioned induction training for the new recruits in April 2020 at the CTI in Kashiwa, Japan. However, due to the spread of the COVID-19 infection in the country, the CTI has altered its way of training from conventional classroom format at the CTI to the small group on-the-job training (OJT) at the respective

workplaces, which were combined with home-based online training through the delivery of a series of recorded lectures with a view to assuring health of both trainees and lecturers by following the government's "stay home" guidance. For this purpose, the subjects of the on-line lectures were selected only to the fundamental ones and the period of home-based training was reduced to minimal but sufficient.

Given that the conduct of home-based on-line induction training is the first attempt in Japan Customs, the CTI has made various detailed arrangements and coordination with the Customs and Tariff Bureau (CTB) of the Ministry of Finance and the respective regional customs, especially in order to make sure that these new recruits are familiarized with the on-line training programs and its modality. A mechanism for taking care of their questions on the delivered lectures was also established. The home-based on-line training was arranged in the following manner, among other things:

- The CTI prepared a detailed handbook for home-based on-line training, such as the step-by-step log-in method, the training schedule and the information security instructions, and distributed it to all trainees;
- Trainees are supposed to read through the textbooks distributed beforehand, and view the recorded lectures on their own PCs, tablets, or smartphones in accordance with the designated training schedule;
- At the beginning of the on-line training, the CTI circulated guidance which reminds trainees of the high value and importance of this induction training for the respective trainees prior to the assignment to the frontline posts;
- The program consists of essential subjects for the Customs officials, including the National Public Service Act, Tax Laws, the Customs Laws and operational procedures related to basic customs procedures such as Customs clearance, surveillance and control, commodity classification, rules of origin, and so on;
- Syllabus for the respective on-line training were circulated with a view to assuring that the trainees duly understands the aims and purpose of the respective subjects;
- Notices and additional information, such as changes to the schedule, are properly communicated to all trainees for smooth operation;
- The CTI monitors viewing status of all trainees through the system and in case of no-viewing, the CTI contacts the trainees in question and follows them up as appropriate;
- Each trainee are required to submit a daily report through the system at the end of the daily program;
- Trainees are free to ask the questions to the lecturers by email at any given time;
- Lecturers conducts mini-tests at the last of each lecture as appropriate to assure if they understands the topics of the day accordingly; and

- Wrap-up examinations are conducted after the delivery of the whole recorded lectures on the respective subjects as well.

Regardless of the above, the CTI has encountered some challenges in the course of arranging the home-based on-line training. For example, while almost all trainees have own smartphones, they do not necessarily have own PCs or tablets which are the most appropriate for the on-line training purpose. In addition, the data transmission capacity depends on the individual trainees' contracts and varies from one to another. The CTI called for the trainees to make necessary technical solutions for this critical and limited time of the training. The CTI lectures managed to minimize the data size of the recorded lectures as well.

While we are not still at the stage to evaluate the effect of the on-line induction training or compare it with that of the conventional group training at classrooms, the CTI will make every effort to manage the current unprecedented challenges and continue to meet various needs and expectations from the CTB of the Ministry of Finance and each regional customs to complete indispensable induction training and raise knowledgeable Customs officials.

Please feel free to contact us at [cti@mof.go.jp](mailto:cti@mof.go.jp) if you have any questions/comments.

## Chatbot “Mr. Arkorn” Anytime Anywhere & Any Device



### Thai Customs launched Customs Chatbot to Provide Customs Services through Line Application

On Thursday 30 January 2020, Mr. Krisada Chinavicharana, Director-General of the Thai Customs Department presided over the launch of Customs Chatbot under the name of “Mr. Arkorn.”



In moving Thailand towards a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability, as stipulated in the 20-year National Strategy, a national reform plan in public administration in accordance with the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan has been developed. This plan places an emphasis on creating a balance and developing the country's public administration system, driving it towards "Government 4.0"

In this regard, the Thai Customs Department has adopted the digital technology in developing "Customs Chatbot", a communications tool since last year. Customs Chatbot is an innovation of providing automatic replies to queries, which is effective and accurate, through Line Application. Users can just scan QR code to have instant conversation with Mr. Arkorn.

The queries for Mr. Arkorn can cover numerous areas of Customs work, including Customs procedure, Customs tariff, Rule of Origin, tax and duty incentives, Customs valuation, law and regulations, Customs notifications and others regarding Thai Customs. Also, users can interact with Mr. Arkorn anytime, anywhere. Mr. Arkorn helps to provide the right information as requested.

With this innovation, the productivity and efficiency in Customs work can be enhanced as the time Customs officers spent answering frequently asked questions is reduced. Their working time can be allocated to delivering other Customs services, following the principle "Do less, Get more." By doing so, Customs is able to provide Customs services in a more efficient manner.

Also, it benefits our statistical data collection, which could effectively help enhance Customs services, facilitate international trade, and improve national economic competitiveness in a sustainable manner.



# Hi, Dear my A/P Friends, I am RDM for A/P region!

Takashi SATO

Regional Development Manager (RDM)

Capacity Building Directorate, WCO



First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of the A/P Members and ROCB A/P for all of your ongoing support and cooperation. I am very glad to work with prominent officers in this region. It is also my great pleasure to have an opportunity to introduce myself and my role in WCO.

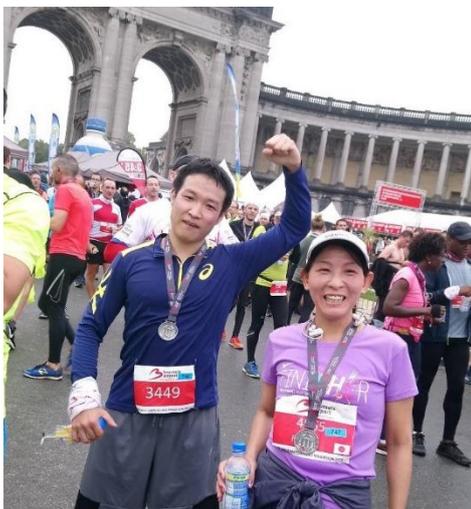
## Introduction

Since I have already had a chance to meet some of you during my first year, taking this opportunity I would like to introduce myself. My name is Takashi SATO, and I am working for the WCO Secretariat as a Regional Development Manager (RDM) in A/P region. I have been assigned to this responsibility since July 2020 succeeding Mr. Shinji ODA.

Then I would like to briefly touch upon my background and work history. Before being assigned to current position, I had worked for Japan Customs for 15 years mainly in the area of international trade negotiation. I was in charge of EPA negotiations with Australia, China-Japan-Korea and RCEP before, and I have also worked for Japanese Embassy in Seoul, Korea for three years. So, I am really glad to return to work with colleagues in Asia Pacific Region.



As for my favorite pastime, I have been enjoying traveling and scuba diving for my vacation, and exercise is also my lifetime activity. I traveled to many Asia Pacific countries for my business and vacation. My most impressive recent trip is Cambodia. Once I visited Siem Reap for participating in Angkor Wat Marathon, and for enjoying the beautiful city and remains, of course. As each country has own unique culture and beautiful scenery, visiting another country always gives me fresh perspective and restfulness.



I feel a similar pleasure even in the business trip. It is very pleasing to be able to have productive discussions with Customs officials around the world while experiencing different cultures. Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to physically meet and discuss with colleagues in the region now, but I am really looking forward to meeting you after all condition will be better and allow us to travel around.

## Functions of the Regional Development Manager

The Regional Development Managers (RDM) are the contact points for Members of respective regions of the WCO. As the RDM for A/P region, my key role is to serve as a bridge between you, Members of A/P region, and the WCO headquarters.

In detail, in collaboration with the ROCB, the RDM is responsible for hearing and understanding capacity building needs of respective Member administrations. Based on their respective needs, training programs and workshops are planned and implemented; the RDM coordinates with the Members, ROCB, and experts, throughout this process.

Another important role is to inform regional members with updated situations of the WCO as a whole. Taking opportunities of regional meetings, the RDM inform Members of recent developments of the WCO by explaining key outcomes of important meetings at the WCO headquarters.



Also, the RDM contributes to maximize the opportunity for developing Members to get assistance by donor coordination within the WCO or connecting with other international organizations.

### Arrangement of Capacity Building activities in A/P region

Thanks to the strong support and contribution from the Members in A/P region and the significant function of the Vice Chair and the ROCB, A/P region acts the leading role for promoting capacity building activities in the Customs community all over the world. My appreciation also goes to donors for their financial contribution.



Reflecting geographical situation, organizational challenges and maturity of Customs System, there are a variety of interests and needs from traditional topics such Classification, Valuation or Risk Management to newly emerged topics such as E-Commerce or Human Resource Management.

As for the traditional topics, we have conducted a numerous number of workshops with support of Accredited Customs Expert in the region. Regional experts have the advantage that they are familiar with the challenges in each country since their country face similar situation. So they can deliver tailor-made training. We would like to continue to utilize this strength for delivering highly valued capacity building.

Regarding the newly emerged topics, based on the Capacity Building Plan for E-Commerce which has been approved at the latest PTC, the WCO is planning to hold first global Accreditation Workshop on E-Commerce in August, and Regional Workshop to support the implementation of E-Commerce Package is also in the plan. In response to growing demands of workshop on Human Resource Management, the Accreditation workshop will be conducted for raising additional expert.

We would like to grasp the detailed needs for providing further effective capacity building, please keep current close communication and feel free to contact to me.

## Hot topics in WCO

In addition to increase basic customs functions included Classification, Valuation or Origin, we are promoting new initiatives such as Small Island Economies, E-Commerce and Free Zone issues. Although we need to seek further support from Members for proceeding aforementioned topics, our first priority today definitely goes to the measures against the COVID-19. As we all have been witnessing, the COVID-19 has changed all aspects of the world, and Customs procedures are not exceptional. The global Customs community is invited to continue advocating for and realize the facilitation of not just relief supplies but of all goods being traded in order to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To tackle and deal with this unprecedented crisis, it is essential for us to collaborate as united global Customs community and show solidarity.



The WCO has started the project to improve the capacity of developing countries' Customs administrations respond to the impact of COVID-19. This Project aims to develop WCO Guidelines for Customs administrations on business continuity and incident response in dealing with various disruptive scenarios represented by COVID-19 and other similar emergency situations on the basis of collected best practices. While many of the Members in AP region have already provided their experiences to the WCO, further cooperation and contribution by updating the situation, reporting new challenges faced, and sharing more best practices would help the Guidelines to be useful.

With regard to our delivery of daily capacity building activities, online workshops will become a new norm. Online training programmes may not entirely substitute the ones on-site, but it is important to continue providing maximum support under this difficult situation. We are all in a kind of trial phase, but for certain purposes like follow-up workshops or preparation of future on-site ones to be more efficient and tailor-made, online workshops seem to be effective. The secretariat has been trying to coordinate with Members for training programs in an online manner, to which we expect and appreciate your cooperation.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to explain the essence of my task and observations as the RDM of the A/P region. As a RDM, what I place highest importance is to have close communication with Members is A/P region. Therefore, please bear in mind that your contact is more than welcome.

Last but not least I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the ROCB A/P for giving me this opportunity. I really hope you are staying safe and healthy, and I am looking forward to the day I can see you again soon.



Best Regards,

Takashi

# The WCO Mercator Programme practices in the Asia Pacific region for further trade facilitation

Saori Nojima

June 2020

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

## 1. Introduction

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force in February 2017 with the ratification by two-thirds of WTO Members. The WTO TFA sets out provisions to further expediting the movement, release, and clearance of goods. Customs initiatives and commitments are critical to the implementation of the Agreement as the provisions pertain to trade related procedures in which Customs are involved in and for which it plays key roles.



The WCO launched a strategic initiative to support trade facilitation namely the WCO Mercator Programme in 2014 to ensure uniform implementation of the WTO TFA and a variety of capacity building activities and missions have been conducted for WCO Members. The activities have been also active in the Asia Pacific region. This article explains the Mercator Programme from a capacity building perspective and introduces some recent Programme activities conducted in the Asia Pacific region. It will provide an overview and outcomes, then discuss possible future way forwards.

## 2. WCO Mercator Programme

The WCO Mercator Programme aims to support WCO Members in the implementation of trade facilitation measures by using WCO instruments and tools. The Mercator Programme adopts a dual-track approach composed of (1) overall track and (2) tailor-made track. The pool of experts on the WTO TFA namely Mercator Programme Advisors (MPAs) have been expanded in both tracks to guide the implementation of the WTO TFA through WCO Mercator Programme workshops and missions.

### **(1) Overall track**

The overall track deals with the interests of broader WCO Members. Activities such as regional workshops have functioned as a platform to raise awareness on TFA-related matters at the regional level, update relevant WCO tools and instruments, share practices of the regional Members on TFA implementation.

### **(2) Tailor-made track**

The Tailor-made track activities have been designed and customized based on specific needs from respective Members. In its process that is comprised of needs assessment, planning, delivery and monitoring, a variety of activities would take place such as diagnosis, strategic planning, training delivery, Time Release Study, among others. The style of multi-year capacity building may be adopted by considering the interconnected nature of the TFA and more result-oriented approach.

### **(3) Mercator Programme Advisors**

Mercator Programme Advisors (MPAs) support WCO Members to implement the TFA at a strategic level in gap analysis, planning and implementation of the TFA. A pool of experts has been expanded through MPA accreditation events and on the ground workshops and missions to ensure a mechanism to better support the Members.

## **3. Overall track activities in the Asia Pacific region**

There have been three regional workshops on the WTO TFA in the Asia Pacific region. The first workshop was in Jakarta, Indonesia in March 2015, and the second and the third were in Kashiwa, Japan in June 2016, and November 2017 respectively. The following is the overview and outcome of the regional workshop in 2017 as one example of the overall track of the Mercator Programme.

### **➤ Regional Workshop on the WTO TFA in 2017 (Kashiwa, Japan)**

#### **(1) Overview**

The WCO Regional Workshop on the WTO TFA was held in November 2017 at the WCO Regional Training Center Japan in Kashiwa, Japan. A total of 28 Customs officials representing 22 regional Member administrations participated in the workshop. The workshop covered topics such as stakeholder engagement, advance ruling, Time Release Study, transit, single window, coordinated

border management, risk management, among others. Workshop facilitators explained relevant WCO instruments and tools to assist Member administrations and the participants shared regional and national best practices in implementing pertinent trade facilitation measures.



## (2) Outcome

A survey was conducted in May 2018 to assess actions taken after the WCO Regional Workshop on the WTO TFA held in November 2017. A questionnaire sheet was circulated with the participants six months after the Workshop and feedback was collected by the ROCB A/P. Out of 22 Members participated, 63% (14 Members) responded. The followings are some findings from the survey.

- 8 Members shared training materials among their officials
- 12 Members submitted reports to superiors
- 8 Members made recommendations to the management for consideration
- 5 Members organized in-house training(s)
- 2 Members developed operation manuals
- 8 Members answered that they observed direct effects realized from the application of lessons learnt (increase of capacity building opportunities, gained relevant knowledge on Authorized Economic Operators, launch of e-payment system, increase of seizure by applying risk management, etc.)

- All the Members answered that the workshop contributed/would contribute to improving efficiency/effectiveness of respective administrations' practices
- 8 Members answered that new modernization project(s) was initiated because of the workshop

#### 4. Tailor-made activities in the Asia Pacific region

There have been many tailor-made activities related to the WTO TFA in the Asia Pacific region. Take the fiscal year 2018/2019 (from July 2018 to June 2019) as an example, 25 national workshops were conducted in the region and many of them were related to core elements of the TFA such as advance ruling, post clearance audit, Time Release Study, risk management, among others. The following is the case of Cambodia Customs as one of the recent good practices.

##### ➤ Mercator Programme for Cambodia Customs

###### (1) Overview

###### A) Gap analysis and development of the strategy and implementation plan



The WCO Mercator Program Gap Analysis and Strategic Planning Support Mission for General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia (GDCE) was held in August 2018 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It aimed at gap analysis on WTO TFA implementation and to support developing GDCE's strategy for the period of 2019-2023. Through a series of discussions and consultations

with GDCE officers and representatives from the private sector, recommended actions were identified. The key elements to be incorporated in the GDCE's strategy were also discussed.

As a follow-up activity, another mission was conducted in January 2019 to support the GDCE to develop a Mercator Programme implementation plan in relation to the recommendations made in the gap analysis and diagnosis mission in August 2018. In addition, as one of core components of the WTO TFA, risk management was focused on and relevant risk management action plan was discussed.

## **B) Time Release Study**

In corporation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the WCO, the National Workshop on Time Release Study for the GDCE was held in September 2019. An expert representing the WCO took part in the workshop as a facilitator. Relevant methodologies and WCO tools were explained and it supported the GDCE to prepare and conduct their Time Release Study in October 2019.

### **(2) Outcome**

The areas to be focused on in the process of WTO TFA implementation and specific actions were identified through the diagnosis and gap analysis. In addition, relevant support was provided in organizational strategic development. Prioritization and sequencing of specific actions/activities was done in the process of development of Mercator Programme implementation plan. Progress after the WCO Mercator Programme activities have been closely monitored by the WCO.

## **5. Mercator Programme Advisors**

The Mercator Programme Advisors (MPAs) are specialized Customs Modernization Advisors with the knowledge and skills to assist WCO Members in implementing the WTO TFA at a strategic level through provision of the advice in gap analysis, development of strategic roadmaps and action plans, as well as the guidance and mentoring in trade facilitation reforms and modernizing processes. There have been two regional accreditation events of MPAs to expand a pool of experts on the TFA. The first event was in Kashiwa, Japan in May 2016 and the second was in Suva, Fiji in January 2018. The following is the overview and outcome of the regional accreditation event in 2018 as a recent activity.

## ➤ Regional Accreditation Workshop of MPAs in 2018 (Suva, Fiji)

### (1) Overview



The WCO Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on the Accreditation of MPAs was held at the WCO Regional Training Center in Suva, Fiji, in January 2018. A total of 14 Customs officers from 12 Member administrations participated in the workshop as candidates. They were assessed against required MPA profiles through a series of individual/group exercises, presentations, role-plays, and discussions.

### (2) Outcome

The candidates demonstrated their knowledge and strategic application of core WCO standards, tools, and instruments as well as the potential to facilitate strategic context discussions in the workshop.

Those who successfully proved their qualifications in the workshop have been invited to following in-country missions on trade facilitations as pre-accredited experts and given the opportunity to further demonstrate their knowledge and competence to be recognized as fully accredited MPAs.

## 6. Possible Way forwards

### (1) A shift to the tailor-made track

As a series of widely scoped TFA workshops and awareness raising activities have been conducted several times by the WCO and other development partners after WTO FTA entered into force in 2017, there has been a gradual shift from the overall track to tailor-made track regarding the WCO Mercator Programme practices in the Asia Pacific region in recent years. This tendency will be continued to accommodate the needs of respective administrations by considering the diverse situations and environment in the region.

### (2) Necessity to clarify specific needs

The WCO Mercator Programme tailor-made activities can be customized on the condition that the needs are clearly defined and specific within the availability of resources. Accordingly, clarifying specific needs is one of the most critical parts to achieve tangible outcomes that respective Customs administrations are aiming at. Specific needs may not only regard the areas to be focused on but also can be linked to methodologies to be adopted in workshops and missions as well as target groups. If respective administrations have certain priorities, it is advisable to explicitly mention them in contacting the WCO and ROCB A/P for the support.

### (3) Ownership

The ownership as well as the strong will as an organization supported politically remain as the most important factor that cannot be replaced with anything else to take strategic steps in Mercator Programme activities. MPAs support Members to come up with potential steps to better implement the WTO TFA through discussion and consultation with respective administrations, however there is no single approach in implementation the WTO TFA and the ownership is imperative to identify the most feasible solution for respective administrations. This is important to ensure the sustainability of the reform and modernization of the organization. The administration itself is the core player to achieve organizational reform. For the efficiency and effectiveness of its reform process, strong political will is indispensable to achieve ultimate goals such as further economic development of the country by increasing the trade competitiveness through the WTO TFA.

For more information and inquiries about the Mercator Programme, please contact the ROCB A/P at [rocb@rocbap.org](mailto:rocb@rocbap.org).

# The Responsibilities and Opportunities of the ROCB A/P

Saori Nojima

June 2020

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

## 1. Introduction

How much do you know about the WCO Asia Pacific Regional office for Capacity building (ROCB A/P)? What kind of responsibilities and opportunities does the ROCB A/P have?

The ROCB A/P is based in Bangkok, Thailand with the generous support of our host, Royal Thai Customs Department. The ROCB A/P is rich in diversity both in staff profile and work content. Staff from five Customs administrations (China, Hong Kong China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand) with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and expertise are based in the office and closely cooperate and communicate with the WCO Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium and 33 WCO Member administrations in the Asia Pacific Region.



The roles and tasks of the ROCB A/P are detailed in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the ROCB A/P which was adopted by the Heads of Customs administrations in the Asia Pacific region and have been revised several times at relevant conferences. In line with the TOR, expected actions of the ROCB A/P are specified in its Strategic Action Plan and they are categorized into four groups:

- (1) Support the implementation of WCO conventions, instruments and tools,
- (2) Further enhance collaboration with development partners,
- (3) Improve needs analysis, planning, delivery and management of regional capacity building activities, and
- (4) Enhance communication and information sharing among members.

I was assigned as Program Manager at the ROCB A/P from July 2017 to June 2020, and was provided with ample opportunities to contribute to strategic actions of the ROCB A/P to assist building the capacity of Member Customs Administrations to continuously strive for securing and facilitating trade.

The purpose of this article is to explain the responsibilities and opportunities of the ROCB A/P by citing specific examples through my 3-year commitment and experience to help familiarize readers with the profile of the ROCB A/P as your close partner of the capacity building activities in the Asia Pacific region.

## 2. ROCB A/P Basic information and its close cooperation with Royal Thai Customs Department

The WCO adopts a regional approach in its Capacity Building Strategy to enhance the sharing of practices and ideas among regional Members to achieve regional objectives. There are 183 WCO Member Customs administrations as of June 2020 worldwide and they are categorized into six regions. In the Asia Pacific region, there are 33 Customs Administrations and the ROCB A/P based in Bangkok Thailand has been playing a critical role to support regional Member administrations in WCO capacity building activities since its establishment in 2004.



The appointment of the current ROCB Head from Japan was endorsed by the regional Heads of Customs administrations in 2019 and additionally six officials are seconded by WCO Member administrations in the region as of June 2020 (1 China, 1 Hong Kong China, 1 Japan, 1 Korea and 2 Thailand). With respective officials' various work experience, knowledge and expertise, blending their ideas and opinions of the ROCB A/P as a whole have been creating an ideal platform to contribute to the regional Members with various needs in developing their capacity as well as to further enrich ROCB officials themselves' experience in the international environment.

The ROCB A/P office is in the building of Royal Thai Customs Department and strong support from Royal Thai Customs Department enables the ROCB A/P to ensure a desirable and stable working environment. The ROCB A/P has been even provided with valuable opportunities to be involved in various events and ceremonies organized by Royal Thai Customs Department.

### 3. Strategic Actions of the ROCB A/P and Specific Examples

In this part, I would like to introduce some activity examples in line with strategic actions of the ROCB A/P:

- (1) Support the implementation of WCO conventions, instruments and tools
- (2) Further enhance collaboration with development partners
- (3) Improve needs analysis, planning, delivery and management of regional capacity building activities
- (4) Enhance communication and information sharing among members.

#### **(1) Support the implementation of WCO conventions, instruments, and tools**

##### **A) Overview**

In this category, regional/sub-regional/national workshops have been conducted to assist Members' efforts to enhance the capacity of officials on specific Customs areas. There were many activities I had opportunities to be involved in and the activities that I physically participated in as a resource person from July 2017 to June 2020 are listed below. From my background and expertise, intellectual property rights enforcement and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement are the two most frequent areas where I contributed. In addition, the engaged scope also covered other areas such as project management, risk and compliance management and authorized economic operators (AEO), among others.

##### **➤ Intellectual property rights enforcement related activities**

- WCO National Workshop for Indonesia Customs on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy (September 2017, Jakarta, Indonesia)
- WCO National Seminar for Cambodia Customs on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy (December 2017, Phnom Penh, Cambodia)
- WCO Sub-Regional Workshop for ASEAN Member States on Border Enforcement on Counterfeiting and Piracy (July 2018, Langkawi, Malaysia)
- WCO National Workshop for Lao Customs on Border Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (November 2018, Vientiane, Laos)
- WCO National Workshop for Myanmar Customs on Border Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (November 2018, Yangon, Myanmar)

- WCO National Workshop for Cambodia Customs on Border Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (December 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia)
- Workshop on IPR Border Enforcement for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand Customs administrations (December 2018, Bangkok, Thailand)
- WCO Regional Workshop on the Accreditation of Technical and Operational Advisors on IPR (May 2019, Bangkok, Thailand)

➤ **WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement related activities**

- WCO Diagnosis mission for Vietnam Customs on WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (July 2017, Hanoi, Vietnam)
- WCO Regional Workshop on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (November 2017, Kashiwa, Japan)
- WCO Mercator Program Gap Analysis and Strategic Planning for Cambodia Customs (August 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia)

➤ **Others**

- WCO National Workshop for Vietnam Customs on Effective Project Management for Customs Reform and Modernization (November 2017, Hanoi, Vietnam)
- WCO Regional Workshop on Anti-money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (March 2018, Sydney, Australia)
- WCO Sub-regional Workshop on Risk and Compliance Management for the Pacific (March 2019, Suva, Fiji)
- WCO Regional Workshop on AEO (December 2019, Kashiwa, Japan)
- WCO Sub-Regional Train-the-Trainer Workshop on Customs Valuation (January 2020, Bangkok, Thailand)

**B) WCO National Workshop for Lao Customs, Myanmar Customs, and Cambodia Customs on Border Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (November to December 2018)**

Let us see more details of some workshops as examples. Three WCO National workshops on the border enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR) were conducted in 2018 for Lao Customs, Myanmar Customs, and Cambodia Customs, respectively and I took part in them as a facilitator. All the workshops adopted a consultation style and my contributions were to share regional practices of IPR enforcement as reference, facilitate discussions to help identifying areas for improvement, and provide guidance and support to review/develop administrative regulation on

IPR enforcement in respective administrations. My support for those administrations did not end only in the workshops but continued even afterwards. Advice and consultation were provided to Lao Customs, Myanmar Customs and Cambodia Customs respectively through various communication tools such as email and telephone.

➤ **For Lao Customs (November 2018)**



The WCO National Workshop for Lao Customs on border enforcement of IPR was held on 12 to 16 November 2018 in Vientiane, Laos. A total of 12 Lao Customs officers participated in the Workshop. The Lao Customs had showed its strong commitment and eagerness to revise the existing administrative regulation for further enhancing the IPR

enforcement and the Workshop participants intensively discussed the elements to be added or amended. In parallel with the discussion on the revision of the pertinent regulation, the participants also examined the organizational setting required to effectively implement relevant laws and regulation regarding the IPR border enforcement. They also exchanged opinions and views with the representatives from rights holders to address existing challenges and identify possible way forward.



➤ **For Myanmar Customs (November 2018)**

The WCO National Workshop for Myanmar Customs on IPR was held on 26 to 30 November 2018 in Yangon, Myanmar. A total of 12 Myanmar Customs officers participated in the Workshop. In order to strengthen border enforcement, Myanmar Customs has strived to review its current practices and establish administrative regulations to implement international agreements, namely WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The participants from the IPR Working Group and newly established IPR Section of Myanmar Customs intensively discussed provisions and elements to be included in the regulations. The participants also discussed the roles and responsibilities of related sections especially regarding the communication in the IPR border enforcement procedures as well as the capacity building of Customs officers to effectively implement the rules and regulations.



➤ For Cambodia Customs (December 2018)

The WCO National Workshop for Cambodia Customs on Border Enforcement of IPR was held on 4-7 December 2018 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in close cooperation and coordination with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). A total of 10 Cambodia Customs officers from the relevant departments and sections participated in the Workshop. This Workshop focused on the key components of the regulatory procedures of IPR border enforcement in line with the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The Workshop also provided the participants with an opportunity to identify the areas for further work to be undertaken by the relevant parties with a view to supporting their continuous effort in strengthening IPR border enforcement capability.



## C) WCO National Workshop for Vietnam Customs on Effective Project Management for Customs Reform and Modernization (November 2017)



This is another example of specific activity. The WCO Workshop on Effective Project Management for Customs Reform and Modernization for Vietnam was held from 27 November to 1 December 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Officials from relevant departments playing critical roles in Customs Reform and Modernization participated in the Workshop. I took part in the mission as a resource person

together with experts from the WCO Secretariat and the UK respectively. My contribution in the workshop included explanations on key concepts of Project Management and facilitation of discussions on value of project management, possible causes of project failure, preconditions for successful project management, and project logical framework by taking Customs situations and surrounding environment into consideration. It gave the opportunity for the participants to familiarize themselves with the project management concept in the Customs context.



### (2) Further Enhance collaboration with development partners

#### A) Overview

In this category, activities include coordination and mutual understanding between development partners and the ROCB A/P as well as joint activities with international and regional development partners. The WCO has concluded a number of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with international organizations and development partners for cooperation and collaboration to achieve mutual interests and joint activities are active either with the MOUs or without on an ad-hoc basis. The ROCB A/P has been proactive in such activities in the region and followings are some specific examples of activities that I physically participated in as a resource person from July 2017 to June 2020.

## ➤ Collaborative activities

- APEC workshop on Trademark infringement determination in a border enforcement context (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, August 2017)
- World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) Regional Seminar for Focal Points on Veterinary Products (March 2018, Bangkok, Thailand)
- INTERPOLE regional meeting to counter online sales of counterfeit and illicit medicines (May 2018, Singapore)
- WCO RILO 30th Administrative Meeting for National Contact Points (September 2018, Solo/Surakarta, Indonesia)
- 6th Meeting between the GDCE of Cambodia and Developing Partners (March 2019, Phnom Penh, Cambodia)
- WCO/JICA IPR Benchmarking Study for East African Revenue Authorities to Thailand (May 2019, Bangkok, Thailand)
- OIE Regional Seminar for National Focal Points for Veterinary Products

### **B) The 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting between the GDCE of Cambodia and Development Partners (March 2019, Phnom Penh, Cambodia)**

At the invitation from the General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE) of Cambodia, I attended the 6th meeting between the GDCE and their development partners held on 5 March 2019 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The meeting aimed at updating the implementation of the GDCE's Strategy and Work Program on Reform and Modernization for 2014-2018, briefing the renewed Strategy for Customs Modernization for 2019-2023 and discussing potential areas of technical assistance. Taking this opportunity, the representatives of the development partners shared their existing and future technical assistance programs for the GDCE and strengthened the network among the development partners to make maximum use of available resources and ensure synergies of respective development partners' activities. I explained various WCO capacity building programs provided in the context of the Mercator Program for the GDCE and earmarked future assistance to the GDCE.



Other development partners, such as the JICA, the IMF and the EU delegation also explained their assistance programs and projects to date and future technical assistance plans.

### **(3) Improve needs analysis, planning, delivery, and management of regional capacity building activities**

#### **A) Overview**

The ROCB A/P has been conducting capacity building needs survey in cooperation with Japan Customs to identify the needs of regional WCO Members and plan WCO capacity building activities. The planning and delivery of the activities have been conducted in close cooperation and collaboration with the WCO Secretariat. Surveys to monitor progress as outcomes of the regional/sub-regional workshops have been conducted six months after the events (Follow-up Actions Survey) as an initiative of the ROCB A/P. The survey results as lessons learnt have been reflected upon for the future planning of capacity building activities.

#### **B) Needs Analysis and planning**

The survey regarding the capacity building needs of regional Members are conducted at the beginning of the calendar year and incorporated into the WCO capacity building plan which starts from the following July. Program Managers of the ROCB A/P play a part in analyzing and communicating with Members to specifically identify their needs.

I was assigned to South Asia sub-region, which includes six WCO Member administrations namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The outcome of close communication and discussion with those administrations on the capacity building needs have been reflected to the planning and designing of national workshops for respective administrations.

#### **C) Monitoring**

Follow-up Actions Surveys were conducted to monitor actions taken after the WCO regional/sub regional workshops. I took charge of the WCO regional and sub regional workshops mentioned in 3 (1) A).

### **(4) Enhance communication and information sharing among Members**

#### **A) Overview**

The ROCB A/P has been proactive in communication and information sharing with the Members by utilizing all the available platforms and means. Meeting regional colleagues and

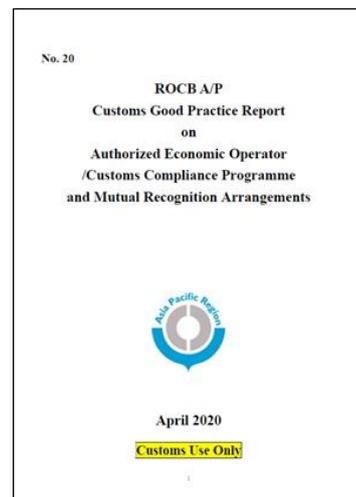
exchanging views and information face to face at WCO workshops and conferences are some examples of such occasions, however outreach efforts are not limited to physical contact. The ROCB website has served as an ideal platform to disseminate information. It includes brief reports on regional capacity building activities, annual summary of the regional capacity building activities as “ROCB A/P Annual Report”, quarterly summary of events and article contributions from the Members as “ROCB A/P E-newsletter”, summary of Members good practices as “ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report” among others. “ROCB A/P Annual Report”, “ROCB A/P E-newsletter”, and “ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report” can be found at the ROCB A/P website: <http://www.rocb-ap.org/>

## B) Article contributions

The brief reports of events I took part which was mentioned in 3 (1) A 3 (2) A are available on the ROCB A/P website. In addition, the followings are some articles I developed during my tenure at the ROCB A/P.

### ➤ ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Authorized Economic Operator /Customs Compliance Programme and Mutual Recognition Arrangement

This report explains the implementation of AEO and Mutual Recognition Agreement including practices of WCO Members who participated in the WCO Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on raising awareness on the development of regional cooperation and strategy in the context of AEO. The workshop was held in December 2019 in Kashiwa, Japan to support regional bench marking studies for possible future improvement of the AEO and MRA in respective administrations.



### ➤ Report on the effective approach of Customs administrations to tackle IPR infringing goods at the border

The report explains WCO capacity building activities in the A/P region focusing on IPR area and discuss how Customs Administrations should tackle IPR infringing goods at the border. The report is available on the ROCB website as one of the articles in the ROCB A/P Newsletter No.59 (January 2018).



## 4. Summary

### **(1)As an organization of the ROCB A/P**

As we have seen above, the responsibility of the ROCB A/P is clearly defined as (1) support the implementation of WCO conventions, instruments and tools, (2) further enhance collaboration with development partners, (3) improve needs analysis, planning, delivery, and management of regional capacity building activities, and (4) enhance communication and information sharing among members. The ROCB A/P has necessary environment to fulfill its responsibility: robust support by Thai Customs Department, staff with rich experience and expertise, close communication and cooperation with the WCO Secretariat and WCO Member administration in the region. Accordingly, there are endless opportunities for the ROCB A/P such as assessing capacity building needs, planning, designing, and implementing workshops and seminars, monitoring after activities, sharing and disseminating practices and information. They are all related to capacity building, and there are a variety of dimensions, stages, and angles of commitment.

### **(2)As an individual**

During my tenure at the ROCB A/P, I had great opportunities be involved in many capacity building activities and events. However, if I am asked if I already know or have experienced everything about the capacity building, my answer would be still “No”. The approach of the capacity building is varied and needs to be modified according to the situation and environment, so I believe that it will be an endless journey to explore the possibility of even better capacity building.

Having said that, what I am very certain about is that my 3-year at the ROCB A/P has been very condensed rich experience with full of great opportunities for the benefits of the WCO Member administrations in the region and it has been also a valuable chance for myself. It provided me with new perspectives, enhanced insight to better understand the Asia Pacific region and potentially to push me up to the new stage in my career. Taking this opportunity, I would like to appreciate the ROCB A/P, WCO Secretariat and Royal Thai Customs Department for providing me with the valuable opportunity as well as all the people, whom would number in the hundreds, I have worked with for their endless encouragement and support.

# Data Analytics in Customs



Mr. Ilkwon Han<sup>1</sup>

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

## I . Introduction

One of the current prominent issues in the World Customs Organization (WCO) is “Data Analytics”. When we see the two words, which are “Data” and “Analytics”, it seems to be familiar with each word itself. However, if we face how to establish “Data Analytics in Customs”, most Customs authorities have struggled to adopt the theme. In my view, a major factor and barrier is basic knowledge of terminology and IT. Anyway, there will be no objection to the necessity.

Needless to say, in recent years, the movement of people and cargo across borders has been evolving. We, Customs must ensure that we collect duties properly and find smuggling within limited resources. Simply speaking, the introduction of the Data Analytics concept the latest technology could be one of the better solutions to conduct Customs operations in the most effective way in this era. In general, Data Analytics methodologies are expected to greatly contribute to Customs operations such as selection processes in various areas, advanced targeting system, situation mapping and Image analysis.

Nevertheless, looking at the current situation of the Members of the WCO, there are a lot of Members who are facing many challenges to reasonably implement, this was found in the WCO’s recent survey<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I had been an adjunct professor as a PCA specialist in the CBCTI (RTC in Korea) from 2012 to 2019. I had many teaching experiences on PCA and Customs Valuation for the training center, WCO EPCBA and KOICA program. In addition, I got several awards at the contest of Data Analysis in Korea Customs Service.

<sup>2</sup> WCO conducted the survey to understand current situations and challenges on Data Analytics in January 2020.

The survey founded that:

- Most Customs administrations do not have clear strategies for an effective use of data analytics.
- Analytics capabilities are often deployed to generate descriptions of what happened rather than performing predictive or prescriptive analytics.
- There is an absence of standards for the deployment of technical analytics products throughout the organization.
- Analytics outputs are not well integrated into the broader organization.
- There is a challenge for Customs in sourcing analytics talent, especially analysts who have Customs-specific experience

In order to meet such Member's needs, the WCO has made reference documents for its Members, and the Capacity Building Directorate (CBD) also commits to support the introduction of Data Analytics to Members' ordinary operations through technical cooperation.

In this article, from the ROCB's perspective as a delivering body of Capacity Building activity and my experience as a Data Analysis expert, I would like to briefly explain a very useful WCO tool. Namely, the WCO Framework for Data Analytics and its two related activities to more easily understand the issue and to give some tips for Member's way forward.

## II. Definitions of terms<sup>3</sup>

Before proceeding to the main contents, we should understand the technical terms that I used in this article. I selected the commonly used terms in Data Science.<sup>4</sup> These definitions are not just for reading this article but also serve to be a reference for considering the introduction of Data Analytics systems in the near future. As you can imagine, learning technical terms and glossary in the Data Analytics area are essential and inevitable.

### 1. Data Analytics

Analytics is the discovery, interpretation, and communication of meaningful patterns in data. It also entails applying data patterns towards effective decision making. In other words, analytics can be understood as the connection between data and effective decision making within an organization.

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<sup>3</sup> I referred the definitions from the Wikipedia, internet version.

<sup>4</sup> Data science is an inter-disciplinary field that uses scientific methods, processes, algorithms and systems to extract knowledge and insights from many structural and unstructured data. Data science is related to data mining, deep learning and big data.

Especially valuable in areas rich with recorded information, analytics relies on the simultaneous application of statistics, computer programming and operations research to quantify performance.

## **2. Big Data<sup>5</sup>**

It is a field that treats ways to analyze, systematically extract information from, or otherwise deal with data sets that are too large or complex to be dealt with by traditional data-processing application software.

## **3. Algorithm**

In mathematics and computer science, an algorithm is a finite sequence of well-defined, computer-implementable instructions, typically to solve a class of problems or to perform a computation. Algorithms are always unambiguous and are used as specifications for performing calculations, data processing, automated reasoning, and other tasks.

## **4. Hypothesis**

A hypothesis (plural hypotheses) is a proposed explanation for a phenomenon. For a hypothesis to be a scientific hypothesis, the scientific method requires that one can test it. Scientists generally base scientific hypotheses on previous observations that cannot satisfactorily be explained with the available scientific theories.

## **5. Open-source**

Open source products include permission to use the source code, design documents, or content of the product. It most commonly refers to the open-source model, in which open-source software or other products are released under an open-source license as part of the open-source-software movement.

## **6. Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

In computer science, artificial intelligence (AI), sometimes called machine intelligence, is intelligence demonstrated by machines, in contrast to the natural intelligence displayed by humans and animals.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the WCO Annual Report 2017-2018, of 336 million imports and 266 million exports, 89 % of import declarations and 92 % of export declarations were submitted electronically. Considering supplementary documents used for Customs declarations (e.g. invoices and certificates of origin) and data originating from other government agencies through Single Windows, Customs collects a huge amount of data in its daily work. Furthermore, unstructured data in text or image format can be easily converted into structured data appropriate for analytics thanks to the development of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and text-mining technology

## 7. Machine Learning (ML)

Machine learning (ML) is the study of computer algorithms that improve automatically through experience. It is seen as a subset of artificial intelligence. Machine learning algorithms build a mathematical model based on sample data, known as "training data", in order to make predictions or decisions without being explicitly programmed to do so.

## 8. Data governance

It is the term used in this paper, has two common interpretations: governance by data, using data and algorithms to govern societies, and governance of data, managing the collection, storage, protection and quality of data.

### III. WCO framework for Data Analytics<sup>6</sup>

Building Organizational Capacity for Analytics in Customs demands the application of a holistic approach to capacity building. To achieve this it is proposed to develop an organizational framework on data analytics which would be aligned to the updated WCO Capacity Building Strategy to enable needs based and structured delivery of support in accordance with the principles that underpin the WCO Capacity Building delivery

The organizational framework on data analytics will form part of the WCO capacity building tools and serve as a guide to formulate, monitor and evaluate activities for organizational analytics development based on several important dimensions prior to launching the analytics journey. The framework will be composed of four parts: governance structure; analytical competencies; data and analytics governance; and leadership and change management.

#### 1. Governance structure

The governance structure defines the distinct roles and responsibilities that each unit or individual assumes in relation to data analytics. It involves decision-making, management and accountability with regard to data analytics within an organization.

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<sup>6</sup> The contents of the framework were presented by Mr. Taeil Kang, Director of Capacity Building Directorate at the 11th session of Capacity Building Committee, 4~6 March 2020

The Capacity Building Framework for Data Analytics will analyze the benefits of the different models for governance structure and make recommendations for best practices in this area. It will also explain the reasons why Customs should adopt one model over another.

The Framework will also cover issues related to the location of the data analytics unit with a view to determining where this function is most effective for Customs (IT Department in most of the Customs Administrations)

## **2. Analytical Competencies**

The implementation of data analytics demands a variety of skill sets such as those of a data analyst, data engineer, data scientist, quantitative analyst, statistician, econometrician and data-visualization specialist, which are to be called as data experts.

The results of the survey show that there are constraints for Customs in sourcing analytics talent, especially analysts who have Customs-specific experience. Based on their policy considerations and human resources policy, Customs administrations need to determine whether in-house expertise needs to be developed or external experts can be engaged for the requisite support.<sup>7</sup>

The framework will suggest ways of attracting, developing, motivating and retaining data analytics staff. Furthermore, it will explain the use of strategic partnerships with other organizations in order to gain access to skills, capacity and innovation.

## **3. Data and analytics governance**

Data and analytics governance are related to the rules and policies that prescribe how Customs administrations should manage and protect their data and how to manage the data analytics process including technology.

The framework will help Customs determine

- How to ensure quality, security and integrity of the data.
- How to identify the needs from a technical and a Customs perspective.
- How the data are to be shared amongst the different owners and users.
- How to choose the appropriate analytics tools or applications to perform analytics.

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<sup>7</sup> Whilst data analytics indeed is not a subject that exclusively relates to Customs, it is important to tie data analytics technical expertise with an appropriate Customs domain understanding to achieve greater business value.

- The value of open-source data and open-source data analytics tools.

#### 4. Leadership and change management

There is a need for Customs to accelerate adoption of data analytics and buy-in across the organization in order to raise awareness of the potential of data analytics and embed it in the organization culture.

The framework will explain in depth the leader’s role in building alignment and reinforcing the analytics culture, advancing the analytics capabilities of Customs and improving decision-making. In addition, it will explain how to empower people to take charge and benefit from data analytics in order to change established patterns of behaviour and move towards a data-driven organization.

### IV. WCO Action plans on Data Analytics

I can present two action plans on this theme. One is BACUDA<sup>8</sup> project. The other is training program.

#### 1. BACUDA project

The WCO BACUDA project was launched in September 2019 as a collaborative research platform focused on data analytics. The project aims to develop data analytics methodologies (algorithms) in open-source languages so that all the Members can employ them with their own data. It is necessary to know programming languages, such as Python<sup>9</sup>, R<sup>10</sup> to understand the outcomes of the projects, because the algorithms are based on these languages.<sup>11</sup>

In this regard, it should be necessary to illustrate cross-institutional collaborative efforts to develop the analytical capabilities of the Members, the WCO will continue working on the BACUDA project in collaborative research with Members and external experts<sup>12</sup>. So far, 13 series of the project were done like below, it will be good methodologies that our members can use in their work.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “BACUDA” is an abbreviation of “Band of Customs Data Analysts”, and means “to change” in Korean.

<sup>9</sup> Python is an interpreted, high-level, general-purpose programming language. Created by Guido van Rossum and first released in 1991.

<sup>10</sup> R is a programming language and free software environment for statistical computing and graphics supported by the R Foundation for Statistical Computing.

<sup>11</sup> Due to my preparation of this paper, I studied basic tutorial courses on the python and R about 2 weeks to understand the project. It should be more than 2 months to master the language fully.

<sup>12</sup> One of the main external experts are IBS DSG(Data Science Group, Institute for Basic Science) in Republic of Korea.

<sup>13</sup> For further customized support, WCO invites Members to contact WCO research unit (Research@wcoomd.org)

## The series of BACUDA project<sup>14</sup>

1. Mirror Data Analysis: To analyze discrepancies between the two statistics, which are import and export data between two countries.
2. Forecasting Customs Revenues & Trade flow: How to conduct forecasting the Customs Revenues and Trade flow by using an open source software which is R.
3. Revenue GAP Analysis: To estimate the revenue gap which could be used in an aggregated manner and also can be done for specific item or specific origin country.
4. Web Scraping of price data: To present a way of automatically collecting price data of a selected product from multiple online shopping malls.
5. Fraud Detection by Machine Learning: To explore the potential of machine learning in Customs fraud detection.
6. Customs Fraud Detection with Python: How to design predictive modeling using open source libraries of Python.
7. Release Time Measurement: how to measure the overall import & export release time.
8. Evidence-based Customs Policy Analysis: To introduce evidence-based criteria to select the most efficient policy.
9. Extracting machine's fraud detection Rules: To present all the steps for applying a XGBoost model<sup>15</sup> in Customs fraud detection.
10. Virtual Fraud Map: To visualize fraudulent imports against non-fraudulent ones.
11. Interactive Visualisation of WCO Annual Survey Data: To present the easiest way to make an interactive world data map.
12. Fraud Detection with Kmeans clustering: To apply the most basic clustering algorithm, "kmeans" in detecting fraudulent (e.g. under-valued) imports.
13. A neural network model to assist Customs to detect potential fraudulent transactions as called DATE<sup>16</sup>

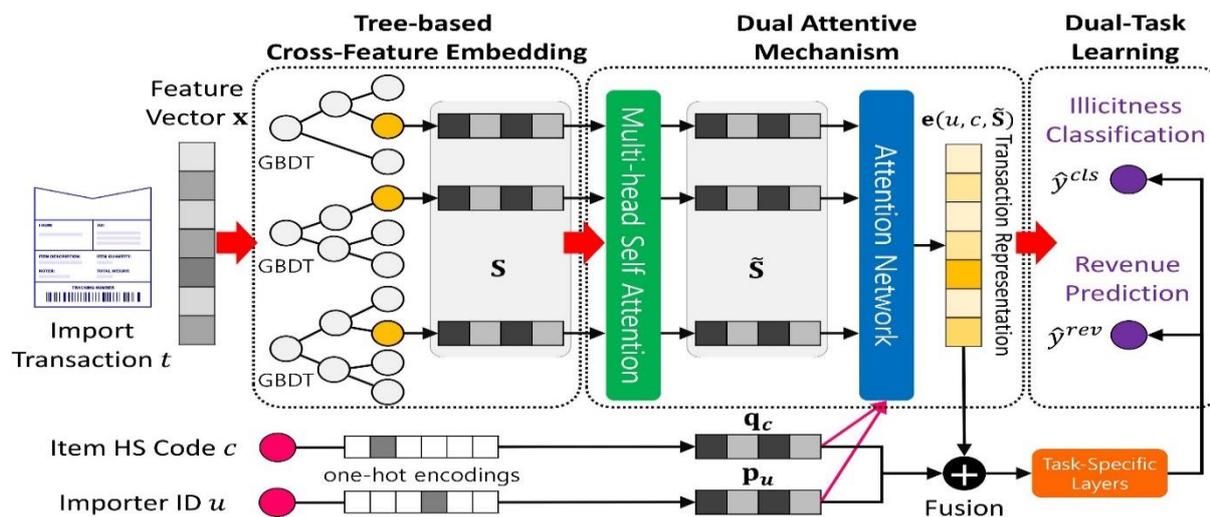
For brief understanding of the project, I introduce the latest developed "DATE" model architecture from the series No 13. As you can see below, DATE consists of three stages. The first

<sup>14</sup> Apart from the series, BACUDA experts will launch new projects, such as synthetic data generation for WCO training programs in data analytics, semi-supervised model for fraud detection etc.

<sup>15</sup> XGBoost is one of the top popular models for fraud detection.

<sup>16</sup> It is called a Dual-Attentive-Tree-aware-Embedded (DATE) neural network model to assist Customs administration to better detect transactions presenting risks of fraud by implementing a pilot test to verify its performance with real-time import data of two Nigerian ports in Tin Can(in Lagos) and Onne(in Port-Harcourt) since March 2020. (WCO Press release, May 19, 2020)

stage pre-trains a tree-based classifier to generate cross features of each transaction. The second stage is a dual attentive mechanism that learns both the interactions among cross features and the interactions among importers, HS codes, and cross features. The third stage is the dual task learning by jointly optimizing illicitness classification and revenue prediction.



When we see each finding of the project, we could categorize the merit of the Data Analytics outcomes that might be one of the four categories like following

- i. Descriptive – What happened and/or what is happening now based on historical and incoming data. To mine the analytics, real-time dashboard and/or email reports are used.
- ii. Diagnostic – A look at past performance to determine why it happened. The result of the analysis is often an analytic dashboard.
- iii. Predictive – An analysis of likely scenarios of what might happen. The deliverables are usually a predictive forecast.
- iv. Prescriptive – This type of analysis reveals what should be done. This is the most valuable kind of analysis and usually results in rules and recommendations for next steps. Recommendations based on multiple predictive models and complex analytical evaluations as to what options (pros/cons) to choose.

## 2. Training Programs

### ■ ONLINE BASED TRAINING

As for the data Analytics areas, WCO will soon launch an online training program supported by CCF-Korea. An online textbook and web tutorial are going to be designed for customs officials to learn the basics of Data Analytics. WCO expects all members be able to obtain the benefit from

these tools within this year. Furthermore, there will be an offline training module which will be a Data Analytics intensive and it is going to be 6 to 8 weeks long.

On a regular delivery-based approach, regional workshops will be organized and global event to raise Members' awareness and meet the specific needs of Members.<sup>17</sup> Along with these activities, WCO will plan a consulting programme to help members' capacity in this domain.

In addition to CCF-Korea, KCS has been one of the most active and supportable administration in this area for a long time. As the one of the best practices in the training area for AP Members, I share the result of the training program provided by Korea Custom Service (KCS) in which I was involved as for your reference.

#### ■ EXPERIENCE OF TRAINING IN-HOUSE DATA EXPERTS (Korea Customs Service)<sup>18</sup>

During the adoption phase of an Electronic Data Interchange clearance system in the early 1990s, the KCS launched Computing Specialist Training courses for selected Customs officers. While establishing an Internet-based e-clearance system in 2005, the KCS once again launched an IT Specialist Training Program. The trainees played an important role in verifying the new systems and identifying maintenance or further development requirements in cooperation with the IT developers.

Based on these experiences, the KCS has come to realize the importance of domain knowledge in Customs modernization: if Customs officials are properly trained with regard to data analytics skills, they outperform IT experts who have little knowledge of Customs processes.

In preparation for an era primarily focused on Big Data analytics, the KCS launched a Big Data training programme for officers in 2017. Trainees who participate in the programme also have an opportunity to develop pilot projects under the supervision of trainers.

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<sup>17</sup> There were several Data workshops: AP(Feb. '19), Europe(May. '19), AMS(Oct. '19), ESA(Jan. '20)

<sup>18</sup> I quote the best practice from the 81th session of WCO Policy Commission report in May, 2019

## Outline of courses

Year	2017	2018
Title	Training Program for ICT Specialists in Customs Administration	
Objective	Developing Big Data Models tailor-made for the KCS by training data scientists	
Duration	Aug 2017~Jan 2018 (21weeks)	July ~ Dec 2018 (25 weeks)
Trainee	16 officers	24 officers (16 Customs, 8 technical)
Detail Course (Contents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Statistics</li> <li>○ Open source tools and coding</li> <li>○ Field trip</li> <li>○ Conducting Pilot Project -&gt;Developing Big Data Model -&gt;Application to the field</li> </ul>	

## Pilot projects developed by trainees

Project	Description
Finder	<p><u>Hypothesis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A smuggler with violation records in Customs will collude with passengers who have no violation records in Customs for smuggling</li> <li>- Smugglers in collusion will travel together.</li> </ul> <p><u>Solution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify passengers who have frequently travelled with a suspect through network analysis.</li> </ul>
Identify paper company	<p><u>Hypothesis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An importer may establish paper companies in an export country, and use them as exporters for fake trade</li> <li>- Paper companies created by an importer are likely to be in the same building/region</li> </ul> <p><u>Solution</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify exporters that share the same address or building or close locations by converting the address into the coordinates, and plotting them on the map</li> </ul>
<b>Identify real importer</b>	<p><u>Hypothesis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A delinquent importer may continue his/her imports in the name of a third party or via identity theft.</li> <li>- However, he/she is likely to use the same supply chain (broker, forwarder, bonded warehouses, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><u>Solution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify importers using same supply chains as delinquent taxpayers.</li> </ul>
<b>Detect fake export</b>	<p><u>Hypothesis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fake export declarations will be made without considering actual logistics time/schedules.</li> </ul> <p><u>Solution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Calculate the time between “export declaration submission” and “departure of cargo from the port”.</li> <li>- Predict average travel time from “the place where export goods were manufactured or stored” to “the departure port”.</li> <li>- Identify export declarations where the two calculations are not compatible with each other.</li> </ul>

## V. Conclusion (Way forward)

As for effectively introducing Data Analytics into Customs organizations, in my view, there are two key elements. One is to diagnose the current situation of Members with its strong commitment to find areas and bottlenecks that need improvement. Then, it is essential to foster and train in-house experts in order to maintain Data Analytics knowledge within the organization.

WCO will use the diagnostic tool to assess organizational analytics capabilities<sup>19</sup>. This consultation will overcome the technical gap and resource constraint among Member administrations. This process will establish the optimum model for each Member.

Furthermore, it is strongly recommended to develop in-house data experts to get a success in introducing Data Analytics. It is useless if the data experts have no knowledge on Customs matters. There should be collaboration between data and customs experts. In fact, it will be part of a policy decision as to whether the data experts might be selected externally or internally.

In the recent Customs operations, I echo that it is essential to utilize Data Analytics for proper dealing with border management and it is hoped that Customs administrations will proceed towards it with WCO instruments.

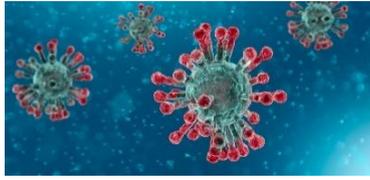
For introduction to many Members, ROCB AP recognizes that Capacity Building activities for the introduction of Data Analytics could be essential. ROCB AP will work closely with WCO and its CBD to support to provide Capacity Building with AP Members.

I hope this article can help every AP Members to understand the theme itself and to adopt the system successfully. I strongly believe this Data Analytics is an invincible tool in the new normal society under COVID-19. Thanks.

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<sup>19</sup> A data analytics maturity model will be developed to measure and monitor the state of data analytics capabilities in Customs.

The WCO COVID-19 dedicated page – from important notices to useful tools, assist Members to address the COVID-19 related challenges



World Customs Organization  
Organisation Mondiale des Douanes



Ms. Chloe Au

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

## INTRODUCTION

Considering the widespread impact of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its adverse global impact to public health, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020. To control the spread of the disease, countries adopted different kinds of cross-border traffic restrictions, especially on people movement, resulting disruption of normal social and business transactions. As a leading border control authority, Customs plays a critical role in the facilitation of global supply chain. Customs administrations should collaborate and work together to maintain the integrity and continued smooth movement of goods across nations. It means that we have to avoid unnecessary delays in the release of consignments and the breakdown of goods movement under the COVID-19 situation. At the same time, safety measures for Customs officials have also become one of the indispensable elements to maintain reasonable Customs procedures and operations. For effective implementation, some related information, like, WCO policy and Member's best practices, are very helpful and useful for Members' consideration.

In this regard, the WCO took the initiative to create a dedicated COVID-19 web-page to provide updated information on the development along with various WCO instruments, tools, Members' best practices and a database of Customs administrations' contact points which can be

useful in addressing the challenges faced by Members. In this article, I would like to guide AP Members in browsing the WCO's dedicated COVID-19 page with some highlights.

## WCO COVID-19 page

Given the rapidly evolving situation, effective communication and timely sharing of accurate information are crucial to assist Members in forming appropriate and flexible plans and policies to ensure business continuity and minimize the overall impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in society. The WCO recognizes this importance and therefore created a [COVID-19 dedicated page](#) to enhance Members' communication and strengthen the cooperation of Customs worldwide. The website provides updated information, not only to its Members but also the general public regarding the WCO's tools, instruments and recommendations that can be used to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economies and societies.



### 1. Important Notices to Members on the working arrangement for the WCO meetings

In February of this year, the WCO issued an important notice containing a number of recommended health and safety precautions for delegates coming to the WCO Headquarters for meetings. Considering the prevailing global situation and the international travel restrictions that would hinder the scheduled meetings, the WCO decisively cancelled or postponed some regular meetings between March and May and shifted the focus to exploring alternative arrangements to continue advancing the work. The outstanding WCO meetings of this fiscal year are now divided into two streams, paper-based consultation or virtual meeting.

### 2. WCO and Partners Communication regarding COVID-19

Customs plays the crucial role in the facilitation of, not only relief goods, but also goods in general during this crisis. However, we will not succeed without cooperation with other border-agencies, international organizations and all stakeholders. Effective collaborations build upon efficiency and trusted communication. The WCO in this regard is committed to support Members during this challenging time by providing timely guidelines, resources and communiqués to the Customs community as well as the stakeholders. Here are some of the deliverables: -

✧ Developed the [COVID-19 Crisis: WCO Guidance on how to communicate during a crisis](#) in which 10 steps for establishing efficient crisis communication strategy are introduced for Members' consideration.

✧ Issued the [WCO Communiqué regarding the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) which encourages Members to work in close collaboration with their public health and safety agencies, to ensure the smooth movement of relief goods and personnel while applying appropriate risk management, and take reference to the 2011 Resolution of the CCC on the Role of Customs in Natural Disaster Relief.

✧ Issued an Urgent Notice to raise Members' awareness on the large number of seizures of fake medical supplies, such as face masks and hand sanitizers, and launched the WCO IPR CENComm Group to provide a platform for real-time intelligence sharing on fake medical supplies and medicine among Members in order to combat the IPR crimes and safeguard the consumers safety.

✧ Partnered with the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Commonwealth Small States Office (CSSO), the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), International Air Transportation Association (IATA) and International Trade Centre (ITC) to develop the [COVID19 Trade Facilitation Repository](#) which consolidates the trade facilitation initiatives adopted by every organizations and stakeholders, endeavoring to help countries mitigate the negative impact on economic activities or disruption of supply chain due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

✧ Joint statements with partner organizations, including the WTO, Universal Postal Union (UPU), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Road Transport Unit (IRU), Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), Organisation for Co-operation between Railways (OSJD) and United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) to pledge the mutual cooperation on trade facilitation and cross-border transport unceasingly.

### 3. WCO Instruments and Tools

The WCO attaches importance to Customs' responsiveness in the event of natural disasters and had developed a number of instruments and tools to address the increasing need of

Customs' to urgently respond to emergency situations such as this. On the WCO COVID-19 page, Members can find useful WCO tools such as the 2011 Resolution of the CCC on the Role of Customs in Natural Disaster Relief, Revised Kyoto Convention (Guidelines to Chapter 5 Specific Annex J) and Istanbul Convention (Annex B.9) etc.. In addition, the WCO has newly developed some instruments to address the challenges faced by Members due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

✧ [HS Classification reference for COVID-19 medical supplies 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition \(2 June 2020\)](#) – jointly developed with the WHO aiming to help Members to speed up the cross-border movement of critical medical products and equipment, ranging from COVID-19 test kits, apparatus used in diagnostic testing, medical devices such as ventilators to mobile clinic vehicles.

✧ [List of priority medicines for customs during COVID-19 pandemic](#) – a living document created in collaboration with the WHO listing the medicines, with suggested HS codes, that are used in the general management of hospitalized patients with COVID-19, as part of the direct treatment against COVID-19 and for which interrupted supply could result in serious health consequences.

✧ [How to establish and utilize essential goods lists during a disaster](#) – a document with highlights of certain provisions of the existing WCO instruments and tools, other reference material and Members' practices, seeking to help Members to define the essential goods which would enjoy priority treatment and facilitative measure on cross-border movement during special disaster.

✧ [Temporary import support measures adopted by Members and Temporary export control measures adopted by Members](#) – lists of related national legislations adopted by different countries, aiming to help Members to identify the countries impose with temporary trading policies on certain categories of critical medical supplies, such as face masks and personal protective gears.

#### 4. WCO Members' practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

As always, the WCO encourages sharing knowledge and experiences among Members. In this entirely unpredicted and unprecedented situation, it is even more important for Members to share their practices in dealing with the COVID-19

#### 22 A/P Members who share their best practices in the fight against COVID-19

Far East, South and South East Asia, Australasia and the Pacific Islands

- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- China
- Hong Kong, China
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Japan
  - Japan Customs Training Centre (CTI) and WCO RTC
  - Flexibilities concerning the AEO Programme
- Korea
- Macau, China
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mongolia
- Nepal
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
  - Flexibilities concerning the AEO Programme
- Vietnam

related challenges. In this regard, the WCO wrote to all Member administrations inviting them to share their respective practices to prevent and/or fight against the spread of COVID-19, while safeguarding supply chain continuity. Now, as of June 2020, you can find 114 Members administrations' best practices, including those from 22 Asia Pacific Regional Members, available on the dedicated page. Additionally, the WCO also developed a document namely "[What Customs can do to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)" with a view to recommending to Members that effective implementation of certain Customs measures would alleviate the impact of the crisis. These measures are categorized in four areas, i.e., facilitating cross-border movement of relief and essential supplies, supporting the economy, sustaining supply chain continuity, protecting staff and protecting society.

## Way Forward

According to the situation reports on COVID-19 from the WHO, as of June 2020, total 10 million cases are confirmed globally with over 150 thousand new cases every day. The WCO will continue to closely monitor the situation and correspondingly update the dedicated notices, instruments, tools and initiatives to enhance the coordination and cooperation of all Members in facilitating goods movement at the borders and mitigating the negative effects of the disease. As you already acknowledged, catching up on the world situation of COVID-19 is also useful for considering future measures as basic information.

The WCO also realizes the significance of improving Members' capacity in the business recovery and continuity. As such, it's newly initiated "COVID-19 Project" aims to provide technical assistance to improve Members' capacity, especially the developing Members, in response to the COVID-19 impact. The Project will develop guidelines for Members to cope with different disruptive scenarios and emergency situations through various mechanisms, such as development of new tools or tailor-made capacity building programs. Members are also welcome to share their best practices as well.

Indeed, facing the new challenges and difficulties that have come from this pandemic, Customs have to be open mind and flexible to prepare for the changes. As mentioned by Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, in the latest WCO News "... the unpredictable is not a reason to be unprepared". In this connection, the ROCB A/P is responsive to the new changes. As for the regional capacity building activities, given that the travel restrictions imposed by most countries in

the region is still ongoing, the ROCB A/P is now planning to put more effort to conducting the capacity building training remotely instead of the traditional physical training workshops as an alternative way. To prepare for such change, we will assess regional Members' new needs, which may be directly or indirectly stemming from this crisis, as well as their potential technological capacity for online training. Needless to say, when the situation improves, we would like to deliver a face-to-face workshop as before. We look forward to the new form of cooperation with regional Members in delivering capacity building activities.

For enquiry, please contact me at [chloeau@rocbap.org](mailto:chloeau@rocbap.org).

# A Brief Introduction of the ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Building Integrity: Measures undertaken by Member Administrations in Asia Pacific Region (2011-2020)



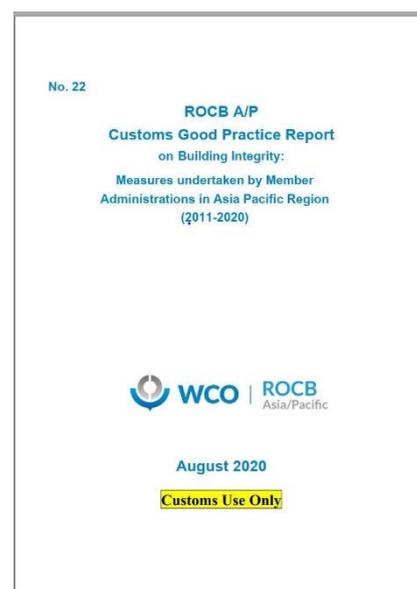
Dr. Hua TONG

Program Manager, ROCB A/P

## 1. Aim and background of this study report

Integrity is crucial for the WCO and its Members. Revenue collection, trade facilitation, enforcement and security, these key Customs tasks cannot be successfully accomplished without the highest levels of Integrity and professional ethics. What this means, needless to say, is that the Customs administration is an organization that plays an important role at the border; hence Customs must be a healthy and trusted organization. Improving and maintaining integrity exactly meets Members' expectation.

The ROCB A/P's publication, namely "The ROCB A/P Customs Good Practice Report on Building Integrity: Measures undertaken by Member Administrations in Asia Pacific Region (2011-2020)"<sup>1</sup> aims to summarize the efforts of the Revised WCO Arusha Declaration and the Integrity Development Guide (two fundamental WCO Integrity tools and instruments applied in the Asia Pacific region) and promote regional bench-marking studies that may facilitate future improvement of integrity practices among Members. This is the first comprehensive study on WCO Members' integrity practices from the A/P Region perspective.



<sup>1</sup> The publication will be finalized in August 2020.

## (1) WCO Main Integrity Tools and Instruments

WCO's strategies reflect the concerted effort of its 183 members and it is evident that integrity underpins the WCO's work. WCO's core strategic policy document- <Customs in the 21st Century> emphasizes "Integrity: the fight against corruption remains an important task that should be undertaken over the years to come."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the most recent WCO 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities and Emerging Initiatives include "Integrity: Enhance the integrity and professionalism of Customs officers in cooperation with external stakeholders." Integrity is rated as the one of the nine Strategic Priorities for the WCO.<sup>3</sup> Over the years, the WCO has developed a comprehensive series of instruments and tools on Integrity topics as illustrated in the Figure 1.

### Instruments and Tools

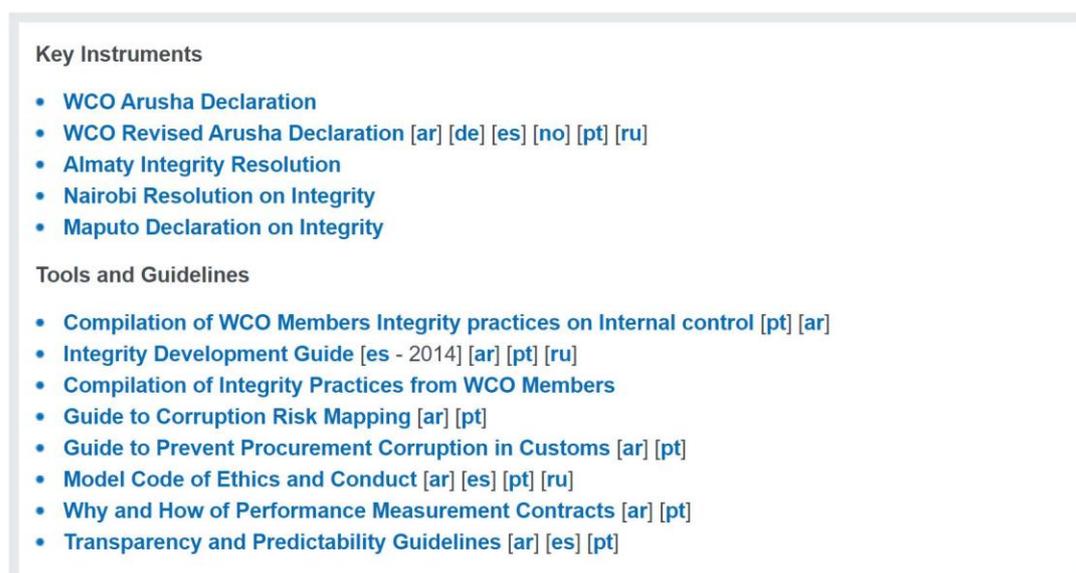


Figure 1. WCO Integrity Instruments and Tools<sup>4</sup>

Among those Instruments and tools, the report is to highlight the particular policy documents: The Revised Arusha Declaration and the Integrity Development Guide.

<sup>2</sup> WCO <CUSTOMS IN THE 21ST CENTURY. Enhancing Growth and Development through Trade Facilitation and Border Security>. P8. June 2008.

[http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/key-issues/customs-in-the-21st-century/annexes/annex\\_ii\\_en.pdf?db=web](http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/key-issues/customs-in-the-21st-century/annexes/annex_ii_en.pdf?db=web)

<sup>3</sup> WCO STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022. P14.

<http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/about-us/administrative-documents/wco-strategic-plan-2019-2022.pdf?db=web>

<sup>4</sup> WCO Integrity Instruments and Tools.

<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/integrity/instrument-and-tools.aspx>

**a. the Revised WCO Arusha Declaration:** In 1993, the **WCO Arusha Declaration** on Integrity in Customs was officially adopted, showing the willingness of the international customs community to comply with rules governing Integrity in order to reduce and, eventually, eliminate opportunities for corruption. 10 years later, In 2003, the **WCO's Revised Arusha Declaration** concerning Good Governance and Integrity in Customs becomes the WCO's flagship instrument to prevent corruption and increase the level of integrity in Customs.

The WCO Revised Arusha Declaration provides Customs administrations with a practical approach for anti-corruption policies and practices as stipulated in the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) Article 5. The Declaration also aligns with UNCAC Articles 7 (Public Sector), 8 (Codes of Conduct for Public Officials), 10 (Public reporting), and encompasses elements of a number of other Articles of the Convention relating to transparency and engagement with the private sector.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Article 1 of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) deals with the publication and availability of information, Article 2 concerns the opportunity to comment, information before entry into force and consultations with traders or other stakeholders, and Article 3 relates to advance rulings; the importance of transparency and certainty also underlines transparency as one of the key factors to be addressed by national Customs Integrity programmes under the context of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration.<sup>6</sup>

The main feature of this Revised Arusha Declaration is that it contains ten key factors for an effective national Customs Integrity programme, namely (1)Leadership and Commitment; (2)Regulatory Framework; (3)Transparency; (4)Automation; (5)Reform and Modernization; (6)Audit and Investigation; (7)Code of Conduct; (8)Human Resource Management; (9)Morale and Organizational Culture; (10)Relationship with the Private Sector, as illustrated in the Figure2.

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<sup>5</sup> WCO Integrity programme overview  
<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/integrity/overview.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> WCO Transparency and Predictability Guidelines, March 2017

<http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/instruments-and-tools/tools/transparency-and-predictability-guidelines/transparency-guidelines.pdf?la=en>



Figure2. Ten Key Factors of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration

**b. the Integrity Development Guide (IDG):** The ten key factors contained in the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration provide the most practical basis for the development and implementation of integrity and anti-corruption strategies relevant to the Customs operating environment. The Declaration is also supported by a number of other WCO tools for promoting integrity and anti-corruption, including the **Integrity Development Guide (IDG)**.

The IDG provides a very useful and informative framework to examine the management, administrative and integrity strategies currently in place and to identify opportunities for further improvement. The IDG is articulated around the Revised Arusha Declaration. It contains a detailed description of each key factor, a checklist and series of questions to conduct a self-assessment exercise and examples of good practices. The IDG is normally used to carry out a self-assessment exercise either during an integrity development workshop or any other type of initiatives.<sup>7</sup> In short, the IDG is a practical guideline on how to implement the ten key factors of the Revised Arusha Declaration on the ground.

## (2) ROCB's Participation of the WCO Integrity Programmes

The Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P) has been closely cooperating with the WCO Secretariat and actively participated in the WCO Integrity Programmes, such as:

<sup>7</sup> Purpose. WCO Integrity Development Guide P1-P2, June 2014.  
[http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/integrity/instruments-and-tools/integrity\\_guide.pdf?la=en](http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/integrity/instruments-and-tools/integrity_guide.pdf?la=en)

a. the Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC): The ISC was established in 2001. The ROCB A/P attended the last three year's ISCs, which are the ISC17 (Security & Integrity: Curbing threats, Leveraging opportunities) in 2018; the ISC18 (Monitoring and Measuring Integrity to Enhance Ethical Climate and Compliance) in 2019 and the ISC19 (Building Trust in the Digital Era) in 2020;

b. the WCO Second Global Meeting of Integrity Experts: The ROCB A/P, participated in the WCO second Global Meeting of Integrity Experts from 16 to 19 December 2019 at the WCO Regional Training Center (RTC) in Xiamen, China. The event was sponsored from the Customs Cooperation Fund of China (CCF/China), which brought together all 26 global integrity development experts from 18 Member administrations covering all six WCO regions, as well as three experts from the WCO Secretariat. During the intensive four days, participants were divided into groups to review and discuss the WCO's main integrity tool, the Integrity Development Guide (IDG) based on the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration on Good Governance and Integrity in Customs.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 3. As the representative of the ROCB A/P, Dr. Tong Hua made a presentation on their findings and proposals to further update the current IDG on behalf of Group 1 in the WCO second Global Meeting of Integrity Experts, 16-19 Dec 2019, Xiamen, China

<sup>8</sup> Please also see: The WCO holds its 2nd Global Meeting of Integrity Experts <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2019/december/the-wco-holds-its-2nd-global-meeting-of-integrity-experts.aspx> and ROCB A/P attends the WCO second Global Meeting of Integrity Experts <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/524/>

c. the WCO Virtual Working Group (VWG) on the Review of the Integrity Development Guide (IDG). Dr. Tong Hua, as the representative of the ROCB A/P, joined the WCO VWG on the review of the IDG for 12 weeks in total between 6 April and 28 June 2020. Dr. Tong worked together with other global integrity experts by using the WCO CLiKC! Platform. The IDG has been used in more than fifty integrity support missions during the last four years by the WCO Secretariat and Members. Therefore, the ISC endorsed the review and update of the IDG based on the lessons learned, identified gaps for improvement, emerging issues, and new best practices that need to be reflected in this important tool. The VWG systematically reviewed and updated the current 2014 version of the IDG based on the lessons learnt, identified gaps for improvement, emerging issues and new best practices in the area of integrity development that need to be reflected in this important tool.<sup>9</sup>

As a regional capacity building hub, it is important that the ROCB A/P focus on highlighting those good practices and initiatives on Integrity areas which have been implemented amongst Asia Pacific Region members, to promote regional bench-marking studies that may facilitate future improvement of respective integrity practices.

## 2. Methodology of the Study

Normally, Customs Integrity and anti-corruption issues are a quite sensitive topics, especially when related to certain Customs incidents. Therefore, the official and trusted source plays a significant role on this concern. Many thanks to the WCO Secretariat, there are several valuable WCO Publications related into this area, such as: the WCO Integrity Newsletters, WCO Transparency and Predictability Guidelines (2017), WCO Compilation of Integrity Practices (2017), WCO Compilation of Integrity Practices on internal control and relationship with external controls (2019) and the latest WCO Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC) Executive Summary and Draft Report and so on.

It is a very good opportunity to review those documents as well as collect all the relevant practices from individual documents and guidelines. Afterwards, to categorize those cases and practices according to the ten key factors of the WCO Arusha Declaration, which will be efficient to reorganize those cases, prioritizing them from the No.1 Leadership and Commitment to the No.10

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<sup>9</sup> Please also see: WCO Members conduct a review of the Integrity Development Guide, <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2020/july/wco-members-conduct-a-review-of-the-integrity-development-guide.aspx> and ROCB A/P joins the WCO Virtual Working Group (VWG) on the review of the Integrity Development Guide (IDG) <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/536/>

Private Sector Relationship. The time span of the case collection is during the decade (2011-2020). For instance, please refer to the Table 1 to obtain more explanation on such methodology.

**Table 1. The source categorizing methodology according to the 10 Key Factors of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration (part)**

No. <sup>e2</sup>	Source <sup>e2</sup>	Member in A/P <sup>e2</sup>	Title /Main content/Highlights <sup>e2</sup>	Categorized in 10 Key Factors of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration <sup>e2</sup>
1 <sup>e2</sup>	WCO Integrity-newsletter 17, 2020 <sup>e2</sup>	India <sup>e2</sup>	Preventive vigilance to reduce corruption in <sup>e2</sup> the Indian Customs Administration <sup>e2</sup>	8. HRM Part <sup>e2</sup> 4. Automation Part <sup>e2</sup>
2 <sup>e2</sup>	WCO Integrity-newsletter 16, 2019 <sup>e2</sup>	Indonesia <sup>e2</sup>	Indonesia Customs launches a perception-based Integrity Survey <sup>e2</sup>	3. Transparency <sup>e2</sup>
3 <sup>e2</sup>		New Zealand <sup>e2</sup>	New Zealand Customs promotes a culture of Integrity and ethical conduct <sup>e2</sup>	7. Code of Conduct <sup>e2</sup> 9. Morale and Organizational Culture <sup>e2</sup>
4 <sup>e2</sup>	WCO Integrity-newsletter 14, 2018 <sup>e2</sup>	Indonesia <sup>e2</sup>	Indonesia's Director General of Customs and Excise, Heru Pambudj, Receives the Bung Hatta Anti-Corruption Award (BHACA) <sup>e2</sup>	1. Leadership and Commitment <sup>e2</sup>
5 <sup>e2</sup>		Philippines <sup>e2</sup>	Philippines Customs Chief Orders Creation of an Anti-Corruption Unit <sup>e2</sup>	6. Audit and Investigation <sup>e2</sup>
6 <sup>e2</sup>		Thailand <sup>e2</sup>	A Virtuous Customs Organization: Transparent and Free From Corruption <sup>e2</sup>	5. Reform and Modernization <sup>e2</sup> 10. Private Sector Relationship <sup>e2</sup>
7 <sup>e2</sup>		Afghan <sup>e2</sup>	Afghanistan Serious about Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity in Customs <sup>e2</sup>	1. Leadership and Commitment <sup>e2</sup>
8 <sup>e2</sup>	WCO Transparency and Predictability Guidelines, March 2017 <sup>e2</sup>	Japan <sup>e2</sup>	Facebook and Twitter <sup>e2</sup> Customs Counsellor System <sup>e2</sup>	3. Transparency <sup>e2</sup>
9 <sup>e2</sup>	WCO Compilation of Integrity Practices on internal control and relationship with external controls, June 2019 <sup>e2</sup>	Australia <sup>e2</sup>	Internal Control Function P12, P28, Annex 1, <sup>e2</sup>	6. Audit and Investigation <sup>e2</sup>
10 <sup>e2</sup>		Indonesia <sup>e2</sup>	Internal Control Function P34 <sup>e2</sup>	6. Audit and Investigation <sup>e2</sup>

Please note that some Member's practice may cover more than one key factor area, in this case, the report will separate relevant part into different key factors.

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The table on the left shows the outline of this report contents, the ROCB A/P categorized each Member's practice under each key factor of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration. Some Member shared more than one practice in this report. At the end of the report, all those useful source links will be shared as well.

It is worth mentioning that such methodology and framework can be applied in the future contents renewal as well, especially if it would be in line with the WCO Instruments and Tools as well as a mid-term or long-term research product of the ROCB A/P. We, ROCB A/P will continuously focus on

integrity areas and produce more valuable researches for Members' reference.

### 3. Findings and Recommendations

**(1) Integrity practices cover cross-cutting areas.** The WCO provides a systemic analysis framework on Integrity issues by ten key factors, which ideally should categorize one practice under one key factor. However, it is very difficult to categorize one practice only related to one single key factor. For example, when it comes to key factor: the Reform and Modernization, it is a more comprehensive concept that may cover other key factors as well; it might be related with Automation, Customs new technology, HRM, etc. That is why in this report if it contains lots of new initiatives and projects, the author will put it under the Reform and Modernization. Another good example is the Leadership and Commitment, which is actually a prominent condition for all the other key factors. Without the leadership and commitment, it is impossible to implement all the other integrity reforms, strategic plans and actions. In this regard, this report is trying to conclude the highlights of such member's practice under the most suitable key factor. Insightful comments and ideas for better updating or utilizing this report are always welcome.

**(2) Keep this report as an evergreen document.** It is pleasing to know that A/P region is one of the most dynamic WCO regions, and contributed a lot of good practices on integrity. Since the time span of this report is crossing ten years, some of the cases are the most recent ones, while others need to be updated periodically to reflect the progress and tangible outcomes. Furthermore, the WCO is conducting a review of the current version of the IDG. Some new elements, namely Gender Equality and Diversity, the relationship with other stakeholders (border agencies, national integrity institute), E-Commerce, Environmental Protection, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, need to be taken into account so as to reinforce the abundant connotation of Integrity. Members are invited to share their experiences of and efforts to promote anti-corruption and Integrity in the light of new Integrity challenges and trends in the new era. Last but not least, some international organizations likely also conducted research on Customs Integrity issues, due to the time limits, this report did not include such materials. However, it is beneficial to listen outside of the WCO scope and search for more valuable information via different channels.

Taking this opportunity, the ROCB A/P would like to express our sincere appreciation and welcome to Members' continuous valuable contributions to the report. The ROCB A/P sincerely

hopes that this report will be using as a living document and useful analysis tool for promoting integrity-related activities and leading to tangible future outcomes.

For obtaining the copy of the whole Good Practice Report on Integrity, please contact [rocb@rocbap.org](mailto:rocb@rocbap.org) or contact me at [tonghua@rocbap.org](mailto:tonghua@rocbap.org)

## ROCB A/P joins the WCO Virtual Working Group (VWG) on the review of the Integrity Development Guide (IDG)

6 April-28 June 2020, Bangkok, Thailand

At the invitation of the WCO Secretariat, Dr. Tong Hua, as the representative of the ROCB A/P, joined the WCO Virtual Working Group (VWG) on the review of the Integrity Development Guide (IDG) for 12 weeks in total between 6 April and 28 June 2020. Dr. Tong worked together with other global integrity experts by using the WCO CLiKC! Platform. He shared lots of good practices in A/P region under the ten key elements of the WCO



Revised Arusha Declaration and the IDG. The VWG systematically reviewed and updated the current 2014 version of the IDG based on the lessons learnt, identified gaps for improvement, emerging issues and new best practices in the area of integrity development that need to be reflected in this important tool.

The 133<sup>rd</sup>/134<sup>th</sup> WCO Council Sessions held in June 2019 endorsed the new Strategic Plan of the World Customs Organization (WCO) for 2019-2022 which identifies nine strategic priorities and emerging trends that will be at the heart of the WCO's work over that time period, and integrity has been indicated as one of those priorities. In order to achieve the goals of this priority area, the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the WCO Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC), held on 20-21 February 2020, endorsed the review and update of the WCO Integrity Development Guide (IDG), its key capacity building tool on integrity. ROCB A/P actively participated in the VWG reaffirms its strong commitment to keep promoting and supporting the advancement of the WCO Integrity tools among A/P Members, and to continue working closely with its international partners to move this agenda forward.

## Farewell message from Ms. Saori Nojima

Dear colleagues and friends,



I have completed my 3-year tenure at the ROCB A/P on 30 June 2020. The day I started working at the ROCB A/P in 2017 seems like very recent and I cannot believe it is already 3 years, but this may be because days at the ROCB have been full of valuable experience and joy.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone I have met and worked with through my tenure of the ROCB A/P. They include people of the Thai Customs Department, WCO Secretariat, Regional Vice Chair, WCO Regional Training Centers, WCO Member administrations in the region, and of course the ROCB A/P. The Asia Pacific region as well as relevant organizations such as the WCO and ROCB A/P are rich in diversity and I have felt privileged to assist building the capacity of Member Customs Administrations to achieve Customs missions such as facilitating trade and protecting society. The experience of the ROCB A/P also has been a great opportunity for personal development of myself in widening perspective and enhancing insight.

From July 2020, I will be assigned as Trainer and Researcher at the Customs Training Institute of Japan Customs, which is one of the WCO Regional Training Centers. I will be continuously involved in capacity building area including WCO activities. I believe that my experience at the ROCB will generate wonderful synergy that will continuously bring benefits to the region. I am looking forward to working closely with you all again!!

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