



WCO Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building

Issue No. 47: January 2015

*New Year's
Greetings*



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Diamond V6 Customs

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New Year's Greetings



Bangkok, January 2015

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year for 2015!

Year 2014 was a commemorative year for the ROCB A/P and some of the Regional Training Centers (RTCs) as they marked the 10th anniversary of their establishment. In addition, a new regional institution specializing in Customs laboratory matters, the Regional Customs Laboratory, was officially launched in November 2014 in Kashiwa, Japan, which is the first of its kind in the world. As for the ROCB A/P, thanks to the generous support and patronage of the Thai Customs Department the 12th RTC Heads Meeting and 10th Anniversary Ceremony were successfully completed, which provided the ROCB A/P with an occasion to renew its determination to the on-going effort in contributing to the region's collective efforts towards Customs reform and modernization. Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the ROCB A/P, I would like to express my most profound appreciation to the WCO Secretariat, incumbent and former Vice Chairs, RTCs, regional Member administrations and, of course, the Thai Customs Department, our gracious host administration, as well as our Development Partners for their invaluable support for the ROCB A/P's activities undertaken last year.

The ROCB A/P will remain active and intends to be more dynamic in its undertaking in 2015. In fact, the regional training program in 2015 has started just 4 days into the New Year (i.e. 5th January 2015) in India, with a good number of representatives from Member administrations in this region. Indeed, this level of participation demonstrates regional Members' eagerness to enhance their operational competence and efficiency to contend with the ever-changing global trading environment, including the mounting political expectation to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and supply chain security measures, among other things.

This edition of the ROCB E-Newsletter includes some contributions from the Customs Experts who took part in and provided professional inputs to the regional capacity building programs organized in the period of October – December

New Year's Greetings

2014. In addition, we would like to share with the readers a contribution from a Member administration on their experience applying training outcomes to their operations. I firmly believe that such contributions and commitment add real value to regional capacity building efforts and foster mutual understating among the regional Members towards implementation of the WCO instruments and relevant tools. In this respect, the ROCB A/P would like to call for Members' contributions to showcase their experience and accomplishments in improving efficiency and effectiveness of Customs administrations through regional and national capacity building and technical assistance.

The ROCB A/P would like to hear readers' views, suggestions and feedback on our E-Newsletters and our Homepage (www.rocb-ap.org) for improved communication with the regional Members and relevant stakeholders. Please feel free to write to us at rocb@rocbap.org.

I look forward to continued collaboration among all interested parties in 2015.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Kazunari IGARASHI
Head of the ROCB A/P

ROCB A/P's Workshops/ Meetings

WCO National Workshop on Time Release Survey for India Customs



15 December 2014, Faridabad, India

Responding to a request from Central Board of Excise and Customs Department of Revenue, India (India Customs), the ROCB A/P, in cooperation with the WCO Secretariat, conducted the National Workshop on Time Release Study (TRS) for India Customs from 15 to 18 December 2014 in Faridabad, India, under the sponsorship of the CCF/Japan which is supporting their TRS to be conducted in the coming year 2015. Mr. Takayuki Miyoshi, CCF/Japan Operation Manager and Program Manager for South Asia of ROCB A/P, and Mr. Samson Bilangna, Technical Officer of WCO, as TRS experts, facilitated the workshop.

A total of 27 Customs officers from 5 regions where the TRS is being planned attended the workshop. During the workshop, they learned details of TRS such as objectives of TRS, possible use of TRS results, how to design TRS, etc., and created a draft of TRS questionnaires by using the WCO internet-based TRS software in line with the importation procedure in India and with support from the 2 TRS experts. They also developed the National Action Plan for the implementation of TRS in 2015.

ROCB A/P's Workshops/ Meetings

WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Seminar on Capacity Building on Customs Chemical Analysis

12 November 2014, Kashiwa, Japan

The World Customs Organization (WCO), in cooperation with the Central Customs Laboratory of Japan Customs and the Regional Office for Capacity Building Asia/Pacific (ROCB A/P), organized the WCO Regional Seminar on Capacity Building on Customs Chemical Analysis from 12 to 14 November 2014 in Kashiwa and Tokyo, Japan, under the sponsorship of the CCF/Japan. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of ROCB A/P and Ms. Manita Sreeta represented ROCB A/P as facilitators. The Seminar coincided with the official opening of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL), the world's first WCO RCL in the wake of the conclusion of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the WCO and Japan Customs.

The seminar, which was attended by 26 participants from 23 members, focused on discussing a series of challenges associated with chemical analysis and strengthening regional cooperation and mutual assistance to mitigate difficulties faced by Customs administrations. Based on a brief explanation on the WCO's Customs Laboratory Guide, the participants shared their chemical analysis practices and discussed the significance and important role of Customs laboratories as an integral part of commodity classification infrastructure. During the Seminar, the Participants also had a site visit to the Tokyo Customs laboratory.



ROCB A/P's Workshops/ Meetings

WCO Regional Accreditation Workshop on AEO in Malaysia



10 November 2014, Malacca, Malaysia

In order to help identify and establish a pool of accredited experts in the area of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), WCO, ROCB A/P and the Regional Training Centre (RTC) of Malaysia Customs jointly organized a WCO Regional Accreditation Workshop on AEO in Malaysia from 10 to 14 Nov 2014 at RTC Malaysia.

Ms. Yotsawadee Trakonsup, under the sponsorship of Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan) and Mr. James Wong under the sponsorship of Hong Kong Customs attended and assisted in the assessment work.

During the Workshop, 14 candidates from 9 countries underwent a series of tests and assessment. It is believed that some candidates will be officially appointed to be accredited experts later and help strengthen Customs capability in relation to AEO.



ROCB A/P's Workshops/ Meetings

Heads of the A/P Regional Training Centers Reaffirm Enhancement of Region-wide Cooperation for Quality Capacity Building Delivery



6 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

On 6-7 November 2014, 12th Meeting of Heads of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Centers (RTCs) was convened in Bangkok, Thailand. Heads of seven RTCs and the delegates, representatives from the WCO and the Regional Vice-Chair's Office attended and discussed the way forward towards better coordination of the regional capacity building activities and cooperation among RTCs.

The Meeting was opened with remarks by Dr. Somchai Sujjapongse, Director General of the Thai Customs Department, as well as a representative of the WCO Secretariat and Head of the ROCB A/P. Ms. Nitaya Tiengtrongpinyo, Director of International Cooperation Division of the Thai Customs Department was unanimously elected as the Chairperson. Heads and delegates of the RTCs shared the recent training initiatives and discussed way to contribute to the WCO's efforts in developing

ROCB A/P's Workshops/ Meetings

Heads of the A/P Regional Training Centers Reaffirm Enhancement of Region-wide Cooperation for Quality Capacity Building Delivery



Training Diagnostics and Training evaluation. Experiences in the application of the regional training program content to national training programs, and usage of the WCO Accredited Experts, were also discussed.

Malaysia offered to host the next RTC Heads Meeting in November 2015, which was warmly welcomed by the delegates.

Heads and delegates of the RTCs attended the ROCB A/P's 10th Anniversary Ceremony, which was generously hosted by the Thai Customs Department, the host administration of the ROCB A/P since its inception in 2004. The Anniversary Ceremony was attended by other distinguished guests including Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, and Dato' Sri Khazali bin Ahmad, Regional Vice-Chair and Director General of Royal Malaysian Customs Department.

ROCB A/P's Contributions

Collaborative Efforts in Enforcement Capacity Building on Trade in Ozone Depleting Substances

18 December 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) organized the Thematic Meeting of South Asia Ozone Officers and Customs Officers on 17-19 December 2014 at the UN Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand, which was attended by more than 30 delegates from 12 countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Iran, Korea, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). At the invitation from the UNEP, Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, attended the Meeting as a facilitator for the Thematic Session on Montreal Protocol Enforcement Capacity Building on 18 December 2014.

By way of introduction, Mr. Igarashi gave an explanation on the WCO's regionalization approach in capacity building delivery and made on-line demonstrations of the WCO's CLiKC! And the ENVIRONET, which is part of the dedicated enforcement information exchange tool CENCOMM. A delegate from the Department of Revenue and Customs of Bhutan made a presentation on his administration's training strategy, including awareness raising programs for Customs officers, trade and industry. There was also a panel discussion on the Customs capacity building experiences on ODS and other environmental issues among a delegate of Sri Lanka Customs and representatives from the UNEP (former Customs officers of China and Korea), which reaffirmed the value of layered and continuous provision of training and awareness raising with a view to maintaining pertinent environmental issues as an integral part of the part of the Customs administrations' enforcement agendas.



ROCB A/P's Contributions

Informal Dialogues on Customs-Business Cooperation for Trade Facilitation



15 December 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

At the invitation of the International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations (IFCBA), Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, and Mr. James Wong, Program Manager for Southeast Asia of the ROCB A/P, joined part of the Meeting of Managing Directors of the IFCBA held on 15 December 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, and had an informal dialogue on possible collaboration between Customs and Customs Brokers for facilitating legitimate trade.

In the course of the dialogue, both sides shared views on the important roles being played and to be played by Customs Brokers in terms of supply chain security and trade facilitation by provision of good compliance guidance to traders as well as collection and provision of accurate data to Customs, which is really an enabler for Customs to conduct risk assessment at a right time, rather than just presenting documentation for clearance of goods. Given that the Customs Brokers are the primary and most frequent contact with Customs for various Customs procedures, their support to move forward Customs integrity issue was discussed. Turning to the implementation of the new Pillar 3 of the SAFE Framework, i.e. Cooperation between Customs and Other Government Agencies (OGA), it was agreed that the Customs Brokers could contribute a lot to this end as they often deal with the requirements of these OGAs, thus give further momentum towards introduction of national Single Window system. IFCBA's probable contribution, as one of the prominent business associations and key stakeholders, to the global efforts in implementing WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement was also discussed.

IFCBA has concluded an MOU with the WCO in June 2010, and its Secretary (Ms. Carol West) is the current Chairperson of the Private Sector Consultative Group. It is therefore anticipated that this informal dialogue provided both the IFCBA and the ROCB A/P with some food-for-thought for future cooperation at global and regional levels.

ROCB A/P's Contributions

ROCB A/P Promotes the AEO program for the Successful Implementation of the WCO/UNODC Container Control Program (CCP)

4 December 2014, Hai Phong, Viet Nam

The ROCB A/P once again contributed to the successful opening of National Workshop on the WCO/UNODC Container Control Program (CCP). This time the workshop was held in Hai Phong, Viet Nam on 4 December 2014, by the UNODC Bangkok Office with the sponsorship of the United States and Canada.

The UNODC has recently introduced the CCP in South East Asia region i.e. Thailand, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. This National Workshop was organized by the UNODC on the occasion of the national CCP implementation for Viet Nam for the purpose of promoting the AEO program, which is away to realize supply chain security and trade facilitation simultaneously.

The Workshop was attended by some 30 participants representing importers and exporters, Customs brokers, freight forwarders and Port Operator based in Viet Nam.

Mr. Seung Kyoo Lee, Program Manager for East, Central and West Asia, made a presentation on the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards (FoS) to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade – Pillar 2 (Customs – Business Cooperation). His presentation focused on the practical way to secure supply chain logistics through the AEO program. He also covered several international instruments and guidelines to implement the AEO program, such as the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), SAFE FoS and WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. His presentation concluded with an outline of the ROCB A/P's activities for the promotion of the AEO program in the A/P Region such as the WCO Regional Workshop on the SAFE FoS and AEOs held on 5-9 January 2015 in New Delhi, India.



Cambodia TRS Exit Conference 2014

Article contributed by Sodina YIN, Cambodia Customs



1 December 2014, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia in the collaboration with Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Customs Organization (WCO) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) organized a Time Release Study (TRS) Exit Conference on 1st December 2014 at Raffle Le Royal Hotel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. There were 140 participants from Other Government Agencies, Private Sectors, Trade Communities and Stakeholders that attended this important event.

In his opening remark, Dr. KUN Nhem, Director General of the General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia, noted that the Royal Government of Cambodia is looking forward to lowering transaction costs through greater facilitation of the movement of goods across border and TRS is tool to measure the actual performance of Customs activities as they are directly related to trade facilitation. He also added that, this is the first time for the General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia to conduct the TRS based on the WCO TRS Guideline under the Asia Cargo Highway Initiative (ACHI), which was adopted by of ASEAN and Japan Customs Director General Meeting in April 2011.

It is hoped that the conference provides a platform to share knowledge and findings of the TRS with stakeholders and trade community pertaining to the cargo clearance processes. The TRS' result showed that the average released time had significantly reduced from 5 days in 2010 to about 1 day in 2014. Meanwhile, the percentage of Physical Inspection decreased from 29% in 2010 to 17% in 2014. Base on this result, the Logistics Performance Index of Cambodia showed significant improvement from ranking 129 in 2010 to 83 in 2014.

ROCB A/P's Contributions

Calling for Enhanced Coordinated Border Management for Customs Control on Travelers

2 December 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

At the request of the WCO Secretariat, Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P represented the WCO at the 3rd Conference on Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building for Border Management on 2nd December 2014. The Conference was hosted by the International Organization for Migration, a Geneva-based intergovernmental organization with 156 member states, and organized by the APSCA. WCO was invited as a partner organization, along with other international and regional organizations, such as ICPO, UNODC, UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. More than 300 delegates from the member governments, international organizations and businesses participated in the Conference.

At the Conference, Mr. Igarashi spoke about the concept of coordinated border management from the Customs perspective, which is now an integral part of Customs control for travelers at the border. In synchronizing the message with the presentation made by the representative of the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, he touched upon the recent amendment of the WCO Recommendation on the Use of API/PNR (June 2012) to incorporate the mandatory use of API to implement UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (24 September 2014). WCO's theme for 2015, namely "Coordinated Border Management – An inclusive approach for connecting stakeholders (for more information on the 2015 theme, please refer to: www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2014/november/world-customs-organization-dedicates-2015-to-coordinated-border-management.aspx)" was also highlighted as the Conference was timely and relevant to the WCO's pertinent initiatives.



ROCB A/P's Contributions

ROCB A/P Participates in the 24th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Point Meeting



18 November 2014, Langkawi, Malaysia

The 24th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Point Meeting was held on 18-20 November 2014 in Langkawi, Malaysia. Nearly 60 delegates from 21 member administrations and 4 observer organizations attended and discussed a series of important policy issues for furthering regional cooperation and coordination. Topics included the progress of the Regional Strategic Plan and affirmation of the Customs Anti-Drug Strategy, and the meeting was chaired by Dato' Ab. Hamid Bin Salleh of the Royal Malaysian Customs.

Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, attended the Meeting and gave presentations on the Update of the Capacity Building Activities in the Asia/Pacific Region, as well as the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Capacity Building Activities. Taking advantage of this opportune occasion, Mr. Igarashi had a series of consultations with the regional members and observer organizations on how to collaborate to assist their efforts in Customs reform and modernization.



ROCB A/P's Contributions

26th Administrative Meeting of the National Contact Points of the WCO RILO AP



11 November 2014, Colombo, Sri Lanka

At the invitation of the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia Pacific (RILO A/P), Mr. Seung Kyoo Lee, Program Manager, represented the ROCB AP at the 26th Administrative Meeting of the National Contact Points of the WCO RILO A/P, which was held in Colombo Sri Lanka on 11-13 November 2014.

During the meeting, the participants shared experiences and information on transnational organized crimes, such as illicit drugs trafficking and environmental issues. Participants were very active, with many suggestions, comments and questions after each presentation. The meeting provided a meaningful occasion to meet other contacts, including other RILOs and relevant collaborators such as UNEP and ROCB A/P.

Mr. Lee introduced the ROCB A/P in brief, including the ROCB A/P's four-pillar approach and its capacity building activities, and suggested ways to improve the effectiveness of the regional capacity building activities undertaken by the ROCB A/P. In this regard, he also emphasized the importance of responding to the Annual Needs Survey which is implemented by Japan Customs in conjunction with the ROCB A/P sometime around the end of January every year.

ROCB A/P's Contributions

The Third Workshop of Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste

10 November 2014, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Third Workshop of the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste (REN) was held in Colombo Sri Lanka on 10-12 November, 2014. At the invitation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr Jing CHENG attended this workshop as resource person.

The workshop was attended by a total of 50 participants from 22 members in the Asia Pacific region. Most of the participants were frontline officers from Customs and environmental agencies. It was also attended by international organizations which are active in the control of Chemicals and Wastes. The participants received updates on the progress of REN and regional and global trends and exchanged experience of important topics, such as: risk profiling techniques for detecting suspicious shipments, intelligence and information sharing on controlling the illegal shipments of chemicals and wastes, and multi-agency cooperation in combating illegal trafficking of chemicals and shipments etc. As arranged by the workshop organizer, Mr. CHENG facilitated a group discussion on national needs for capacity building and awareness raising and provided inputs relating to the organization of capacity building activities for the REN in 2015.



ROCB A/P's Contributions

ROCB A/P Promotes AEO Program to Complement Port Security Efforts



30 October 2014, Pattaya, Thailand

The ROCB A/P contributed to a National Workshop on the WCO/UNODC Container Control Program (CCP) for Thailand, held on 30 October 2014, in Pattaya, Thailand, by UNODC Bangkok Office with sponsorship of the United States and Canada. The Workshop's aim, to promote AEO members' active support and participation in Customs efforts to secure supply chain under the CCP through shared responsibilities, was discussed at the courtesy visit of Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P to the UNODC Bangkok Office in July this year shortly after he took the office. The ROCB A/P, represented by Mr. Igarashi and Mr. S.K Lee, made a presentation on the important needs and value of the Customs-business collaboration, which are articulated in a series of the WCO Convention and instruments, including the SAFE Framework of standards.

The Workshop was attended by some 30 participants representing importers and exporters, Customs brokers, Freight forwarders and Port Operator, who are based in the Laem Chabang Port area. The Thai Customs Department also took advantage of this Workshop to promote the Thai AEO Program and inform attendees of the benefits that accrue from membership. This Workshop is the first of a round of National Workshops planned for the Southeast Asian countries as a follow-up to the WCO/UNODC Container Control Program Kick-off Meeting for Southeast Asian countries, held on 20-21 August 2014 in Bangkok. The workshops are designed to encourage the prompt launching of the CCPs in selected ports in the Southeast Asian countries. The ROCB A/P's contribution was much appreciated and they were invited to continue to support CCP program so that the twin goals of port security and trade facilitation for AEO members can be properly accomplished through shared responsibilities among all relevant stakeholders.

ROCB A/P's Contributions

ROCB A/P Visits the Asia-Pacific Postal Union to Discuss Future Collaboration

28 October 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

At the invitation of Mr. LIN Hongliang, Director of the Asia-Pacific Postal Union (APPU), Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P visited the APPU Bureau in Bangkok on 28 October 2014. The invitation was extended following Mr. Igarashi's attendance as the representative of the WCO to the APPU's Strategic Seminar on Postal Supply Chain Security held on 22-24 October 2014 in Bangkok.

The APPU is a regional intergovernmental organization consisting of 32 members, who are quite similar to the WCO's A/P region. Although the APPU is independent from the UPU, the APPU abide by the UPU guidelines and provide technical assistance to the member postal authorities based on the UPU standards and guidelines.

Mr. Igarashi and Mr. LIN outlined the capacity building policies and approaches employed by their respective entities and reaffirmed the critical importance of collaboration between Customs and other government agencies or authorities involved in the international supply chain. In this regard, the ROCB A/P was asked to talk more to the postal authorities about the supply chain security at their regional seminars held in APPU Training facilities in Bangkok as appropriate. The APPU representatives and lecturers in return may be invited to observe future ROCB-AP training programs, for example when organized in Bangkok, to deepen their understanding of globally coordinated approaches for supply chain security, especially the collection and the use of the pre-loading cargo information.



ROCB A/P's Contributions

Promoting Customs-Post Collaboration in Postal Supply Chain Security

22 October 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, attended the Asia Pacific Postal Union (APPU)'s Strategic Seminar on Postal Supply Chain held on 22 October 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, as the WCO representative. This Seminar was initiated jointly by the APPU and La Poste (France) with the aims of building a Roadmap for a secure postal supply chain, and deepening understanding on Advance Electronic Information (AEI) developments, including WCO/ICAO efforts to devise international standards and UPU AEI model. Approximately 45 participants, including representatives from the APPU members and speakers attended the Seminar.



Mr. Igarashi spoke about the SAFE Framework and the WCO's work on Air Cargo Security, including the progress from meetings of the Technical Experts Group on Air Cargo Security (TEGACS) and the ICAO-WCO Joint Conferences on Enhancing Air Cargo Security and Facilitation. In terms of UPU-WCO collaboration, he gave explanations of the works undertaken by the WCO/UPU Contact Committee, including the development of a series of guides as well as examination of the electronic data exchange between Customs and the postal authorities. He further highlighted the revision of the SAFE in 2015, which is to include the 3rd Pillar with regard to Cooperation between Customs and other government agencies and the use of pre-loading advance electronic cargo information. Mr. Igarashi also stressed the need to further strengthen collaboration among the relevant stakeholders to contend with a series of security-related threats. His contribution was well received and much appreciated.

Taking advantage of the attendance to this important Seminar, Mr. Igarashi had a round of informal consultations with representatives of relevant international organizations/associations regarding future collaboration in capacity building activities in the A/P region.

ROCB A/P's Contributions

The Second WCO-ADB Joint Sub-regional Train-The-Trainer Workshop on Customs Valuation under the Multi-year Assistance for SASEC Countries -Project Diamond V6 Customs-



21 - 24 October 2014, Male, Maldives

The ROCB A/P and the ADB, with support from the WCO Secretariat, Japan Customs, and Maldives Customs Service, conducted the Second WCO-ADB Joint Sub-regional Train-The-Trainer Workshop on Customs Valuation under the Multi-year Assistance for the SASEC Countries from 21 to 24 October 2014 in Male, Maldives. A total of 18 participants, with 3 from each SASEC Country (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka), and 7 observers from the host country (Maldives) attended the workshop.

This multi-year assistance initiative for the SASEC countries is designed to support their efforts to realize the proper management of Customs Valuation control ideally through Post Clearance Audit for ensuring both effective trade facilitation and proper collection of national revenue. The multi-year approach, which will be completed by June 2016, comprises 2 regional workshops, bringing together all 6 SASEC countries, as well as 2 national workshops/activities (in line with the Action Plans developed in this Sub-regional Workshop) per SASEC country.

In the Workshop, the participants; (i) refined their national Action Plans initiated during the first Sub-regional Workshop, to ensure realistic and achievable goals for implementation at the national level, (ii) discussed the potential added value of regional cooperation in Customs Valuation control and reached the agreement that the participants and experts (Japan Customs, Maldives Customs Service, the WCO, and the ROCB A/P) will communicate through the WCO CLIKC! platform (a WCO members' website especially designed for this project) to move ahead with the project, and (iii) learned teaching skill and methodology.

At the last "Summary and Way forward" session, the project nickname, "Diamond V6 Customs" (Diamond stands for the wish that this project will be successful and become a precious thing like a diamond for SASEC countries, V stands for Customs Valuation, and 6 Customs stands for 6 SASEC Customs Administrations) was unanimously adopted by the participants and they pledged themselves to push forward the project and share the knowledge acquired from the workshop with their colleagues.

Special Topics

ROCB A/P Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary

7 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

The ROCB A/P's 10th Anniversary Ceremony was carried out on 7 November 2014 at the Sukhothai Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. The Thai Customs Department, the host administration of the ROCB A/P since its inception in September 2014, generously hosted the ceremony, which was attended by a number of distinguished guests including Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, Dato' Sri Khazali bin Ahmad, Regional Vice-Chair and Director General of Royal Malaysian Customs Department, and former ROCB A/P staff members, including 2 former heads of the ROCB A/P, Mr. Takashi Matsumoto and Mr. Yoshihiro Kosaka.

At the ceremony, Dr. Somchai Sujjapongse, Director General of the Thai Customs Department, delivered his congratulatory remarks and re-affirmed his administration's continued unsparing support for the ROCB A/P, which is the A/P region's focal point for WCO capacity building activities. Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General and one of the twin fathers of the ROCB framework, spoke about the historical background of establishing the ROCB in Bangkok, the world's first of this kind, and the WCO's continued efforts in contending with ever changing global picture nature of international trade and Customs administrations.

Dato' Sri Khazali bin Ahmad, the A/P Regional Vice-Chair, outlined his determination to use his leadership to foster further enhanced cooperation and coordination among the Customs administrations in the A/P region, including the collaboration with the ROCB A/P during his tenure in the office.

Special Topics

ROCB A/P celebrates its 10th Anniversary

Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P made a speech and thanked all stakeholders for their unsparing support for the Office's activities. In his speech, Mr. Igarashi introduced all of the officials who served at the ROCB A/P as permanent staff and ad hoc supporters and complimented their great dedication and accomplishment. In concluding the speech, he pledged the ROCB A/P's renewed determination to redouble its efforts in coordinating the capacity building for the benefit of the regional members in the next 10 years and beyond.

Following the speeches, as a commemorative activity, all guests were invited to join a tree planting ceremony, which symbolizes the region's cooperation for, and commitment to the rooting and blooming of the world's first ROCB in the center of the Asia/Pacific region. Guests poured soil and watered the twin trees, icons of the close relationship between the WCO and Asia/pacific region, as well as the twin fathers of the ROCB A/P. These trees were named "the ROCB Trees." The Ceremony was concluded with a gala dinner hosted by Dr. Somchai, Director General of the Thai Customs Department.

The "ROCB Trees" were planted in the premises of the Thai Customs Department on 10 November 2014 jointly by Thai Customs Executives and the ROCB A/P staff members.

The ROCB A/P staff members express sincere appreciation for the guests that attended the Ceremony and, most importantly, express profound appreciation to Dr. Somchai and all of the Thai Customs members who contributed a great deal to making the Ceremony a big success.



Official Visit of WCO Secretary General to LAO PDR



5 November 2014, Vientiane, Laos PDR

Upon the invitation of LAO PDR Customs, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of the WCO and Mr. James Wong of the ROCB A/P made an official visit to Lao PDR from 5 to 6 November 2014.

On 5 November, Dr. Mikuriya visited the Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge 1 International Customs Checkpoint, Regional Customs Office V. The visit provided both Lao PDR Customs officers and himself with an opportunity to communicate with each other about the practical border control perspective. They exchanged views on the operation of the Bridge, Customs valuation, certificate of origins and AYSCUDA (the electronic system for handling Customs data). During the visit, Lao PDR Customs officers were also informed of the operation of the ROCB A/P which organizes and coordinated capacity building activities for the 33 WCO members in the A/P region.

Official Visit of WCO Secretary General to LAO PDR

On 6 November, Dr. Mikuriya paid courtesy calls to the Chairperson of Economic, Planning and Finance Committee, the National Assembly; Minister of Finance; Deputy Prime Minister (in charge of Macro-Economics and Service Sectors Deputy); Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Minister of Industry and Commerce. During these courtesy calls, he emphasized that the WCO's keen expectation for the Lao PDR's early accession to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), which was well received by these high-ranking officials. Dr. Mikuriya was informed of the planned revision of the relevant laws in Lao PDR towards the accession to the RKC.

There was also discussion of the provision of technical assistance to Lao PDR. In this respect, Dr. Mikuriya briefly explained the work of the ROCB A/P. Mr. Wong provided the Lao PDR offices with a copy of the ROCB A/P Annual Reports 2013/2014 so that the officers concerned could have a better understanding of the WCO tools/technical assistance and capacity building activities in the A/P region.



Guest Visits

Seeking Better Collaboration with ADB in Southeast Asia Region



9 December 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

In the course of a series of missions to Southeast Asian countries, Ms. Kanya Sasradipoera, Regional Cooperation Specialist of the Southeast Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), accompanied by Mr. David Martin, a consultant to the ADB, visited the ROCB A/P on 9 December 2014. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, and Mr. James Wong, Program Manager for Southeast Asia, cordially welcomed the ADB colleagues.

Ms. Sasradipoera briefed the ROCB A/P about the on-going trade facilitation project in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region and sought coordinated efforts with the ROCB A/P in assisting the streamlining of transit systems in the region. As a possible way forward, given that the theme of the WCO in 2015 is Coordinated Border Management, Mr. Igarashi suggested joint efforts to assist implementing a trade facilitation package from a broader perspective, including introduction of a smooth transit regime through coordination of the pertinent regulations administered by other government agencies. Possible collaboration under the WCO's Mercator Program was discussed.

After a friendly and candid exchange of ideas and views, Ms. Sasradipoera and Mr. Martin were invited to give some water to the "ROCB trees" to symbolize and wish for continued cooperation between the ADB and the ROCB A/P.

Guest Visits

KCS Vice Commissioner Re-affirms His Support for the ROCB A/P



24 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

Dr. CHUN Hong-uk, Vice Commissioner of the Korea Customs Service (KCS), accompanied by Mr. JEONG Seung-hwan, Director of Audit Policy Division, and Mr. KIM Won-seok, Deputy Director, Multilateral Cooperation Division, visited the ROCB A/P on 24 November 2014 on the occasion of his visit to the Thai Customs Department for bilateral cooperation talks.

Dr. CHUN and Mr. Kazunari IGARASHI, Head of the ROCB A/P shared the opinion to assist with capacity building activities in the Asia/Pacific region. Dr. CHUN also promised his administration's continued active support to the ROCB A/P's activities in various forms.

To commemorate the ROCB A/P's 10th anniversary of its establishment, Dr. CHUN presented the ROCB A/P a clock set which contains a world map with four clocks on four time zones, namely Brussels, Bangkok, Beijing/Hong Kong and Seoul/Tokyo. Mr. IGARASHI presented the ROCB A/P 10th anniversary commemorative cups to the KCS delegation for their memory and token of the Office's appreciation.

After signing the visitors' book, Dr. CHUN and his attendants, as the first high-ranking visitors after the 10th Anniversary Ceremony, were cordially invited to give water to the so-called "ROCB A/P trees" which symbolize nourishment of hope to the ROCB A/P and the members in the Asia/Pacific region.

Guest Visits

The President of the Shanghai Customs College Visits the ROCB A/P

5 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

On 5 November 2014, seizing the opportunity of their mission to the 12th Meeting of the Heads of WCO Asia Pacific Regional Training Centers (RTCs) held on 6-7 November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, Xiao Jian Guo, President of the Shanghai Customs College (SCC), and Mr. Shujie Zhang visited the ROCB A/P. The visit was warmly welcomed by the ROCB A/P staff members. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the RILO A/P, expressed his appreciation to the President and the SCC for their strong support for the ROCB A/P and congratulated SCC on their 60th Anniversary and 10th Anniversary as a RTC. Mr. Xiao and Mr. Igarashi re-affirmed continuation of the existing close collaboration for the sake of regional interests.



A Bench-Marking Visit by the AKMAL Delegates



3 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

Delegates from the AKMAL (Royal Malaysian Customs Academy), headed by Ms. Maslina Binti Mohd Ali, Assistant Director of Customs, visited the ROCB A/P for a bench-marking study. Their interests were quite vast and included among other things: how to plan capacity building programs; how to prepare regional training sessions; and how to evaluate training programs. In response to the AKMAL's keen interests and to deepen mutual understating of better coordinated efforts and collaboration in delivering quality technical assistance programs for the region, the ROCB A/P briefed them on the ROCB A/P's region's capacity building strategy as well as the practices being employed by the ROCB A/P with regard to pooling and utilization of the region's resources, and the way to optimize the effects of the regional capacity building programs. There were active exchanges of views and experiences between the AKMAL delegates and the ROCB A/P staff members on various topics.

The ROCB A/P thanked the AKMAL for their unsparing support and contribution to the capacity building activities and re-affirmed its eagerness to maintain close dialogues with the AKMAL to better contribute to the region jointly. Delegates of the AKMAL complimented the ROCB A/P for its 10th anniversary to be celebrated on 7 November 2014.

Contributions from ACEs

Diamond V6 Customs



Reported by Ms. Maki Kitaura
WCO Accredited Expert on Customs Valuation
Senior Inspector, Customs Clearance
Coordination Section,
Customs, Government of Japan

Have you ever heard of the term “**Diamond V6 Customs**”? Do you have any ideas what “Diamond V6 stands” for? You will see the reasons at the end of this article.

As an accredited expert on Customs Valuation, I fortunately had an opportunity to work at the first and second WCO-ADB joint sub-regional TRAIN THE TRAINER workshops on Customs Valuation with the WCO Secretariat and other accredited experts in the region. Those workshops were organized under the multi-year joint project operated by the WCO and the ADB, aiming to support proper Customs Valuation management through Post Clearance Audit for SASEC countries, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Through two workshops, first one held at Colombo, Sri Lanka in February 2014 and the second at Male, Maldives in October 2014, the participants discussed the issues of Customs Valuation Control, learned skills and methodologies, then finalized an action plan for this multi-year technical assistance project. Two further national workshops are scheduled to be held in the six countries respectively by the year 2016 in order to achieve their own targets set in each National Action Plan.



Contributions from ACEs

Diamond V6 Customs



With regard to Customs Valuation Control, we shared our views and experiences on several challenges which we are facing, such as undervaluation and how to enhance the function of Post Clearance Audit. As a result of the discussion, we reconfirmed the necessity of regional cooperation and decided to utilize the “WCO CliKC!” for the purpose of exchanging information for this project.

As to the trainer’s skill and methodology, we really enjoyed the session through games and activities. This kind of approach would be an eye-opener for some participants. At the end of the session, we all could learn the importance of being interactive and having the sense of putting ourselves into others’ shoes.



As for me, it was a golden opportunity to work with other accredited experts in the region and the WCO Secretariat. In the session, I myself could also realize the difficulty of standing in front of the participants as an expert and refresh my KSA (knowledge, skill and attitude) in the session.

After two workshops, I can say that we are connected with bonds of friendship under this project, since almost all the participants participated in both workshops.

By taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Sri Lanka and Maldives Customs who hosted these valuable workshops. Of course, many thanks go to my great friends, all the participants of the workshops and their dedication towards this project.

Lastly, have you got any ideas about “**Diamond V6 Customs**”? In fact, it is the nickname of this project which was decided at the second workshop. “Diamond” stands for the wish that this project will be successful and become a precious thing like a diamond for SASEC countries, “V” stands for “Valuation” and “6” means six countries in this project. It is our pledge that we will be brilliant, strong and valuable in the project like a “Diamond”.



Contributions from ACEs

Report on WCO Technical Assistance Mission Myanmar Time Release Study Exit Conference

WCO Technical Assistance Mission
Myanmar Time Release Study Exit Conference
26 September 2014, Yangon, Myanmar



Reported by Ms. Kajal Singh
Additional Commissioner, WCO Cell,
Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC)
Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, India

1. The WCO recommended me as a resource person to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to participate in the Exit Conference on publicizing TRS done by the Myanmar Customs Department (MCD).

Background

2. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has embarked on economic, political and governance reform programs since 2010. In line with this, the Myanmar Customs Department (MCD) recognized that streamlining and simplifying Customs clearance procedures are beneficial to the importers, exporters and to the Myanmar economy overall. The MCD recognized the need and benefit of WCO's Guide to measure the time required for the release of goods. TRS has been established as a tool to measure the actual performance of Customs activities as they directly relate to trade facilitation.

3. In preparation for implementing TRS in Myanmar, the ADB with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and WCO provided training to the Myanmar Customs officers and the stakeholders in November 2013 by holding a TRS Workshop in Yangon. Briefings had been given to all those responsible for collecting the data just before the actual implementation of TRS. A National Working Group (NWG) had been formed to undertake TRS in Myanmar.

4. The Myanmar Customs administration had decided that the subject of this study would be the

- i. Asia World Port Terminal (AWPT)- AWPT imports and exports follow a sea mode procedure
- ii. Yangon International Airport Customs Warehouse -follows an air mode procedure
- iii. Muse border post (border between Myanmar and China) - follows the land mode procedure.

These three locations were chosen due to their strategic positions as they count for the most volume of trades.

Contributions from ACEs

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5. The study was done from 20th March to 26th March 2014 at AWPT and from 21st to 27th March at the Airport Warehouse and the Muse border post. It was also decided that only import transactions would be the subject of the study. Motor vehicles for private use and special order imports were not included in the study. Special order imports include goods imported for Government projects, vaccines which require cold storage facility, etc.

6. Objective of the Study

- i. To measure the average time that takes for goods to be cleared from their time of arrival into Myanmar until they are released by Customs.
- ii. To measure the average time required for Customs clearance procedures, for intervention by relevant government agencies, and for actions by other stakeholders during the process.
- iii. To determine where bottlenecks or obstacles exist in the processes and possible reasons for the delays.
- iv. To identify opportunities for improvement and recommend possible remedies to increase Customs efficiency thereby enhancing trade facilitation

7 Time Release Study Exit Conference Yangon, Myanmar, 26th September 2014

The conference was held in Hotel Parkroyal, Yangon to publicize the results of the Time Release Study. The conference was inaugurated by the Mr. Htun Thein, Director General of Myanmar Customs Department. There were around 90 to 100 persons present for the conference. The participants included customs officers, representatives of Other Government Agencies (OGAs), members of various private sector associations like the Customs brokers, freight forwarders federation, etc. The print and electronic media was also present to cover the event.

8. The first presentation was made by me on "Trade Facilitation and TRS". In the presentation a brief background of WCO and its role and activities in the International Customs arena was discussed. An overview of the ECP, the TFA and WCO's Mercator programme was also presented. TRS in the context of the ECP and TFA and its concept, tools, objectives, and use of study results was discussed. The activities of WCO in Trade Facilitation in general and TRS specifically in Southeast Asia in 2013/14 were presented. The presentation was well received.

9. The second presentation on , "ADB's support to Trade Facilitation and Time Release Study in Southeast Asia" was made by Mr. Shunichi Hinata, Regional Cooperation Specialist, Southeast Asia department, ADB. He spoke of the support of ADB in Trade Facilitation and of the "Asia Cargo Highway" (ACH). ACH is a trade initiative of ASEAN-Japan and its long-term goal is to create seamless flows of goods in Asia. An amount of \$25 million for the period 2011-2015 has been committed by the Government of Japan for ACH. It was also informed that in the April 2011 meeting of the ASEAN-Japan Customs Directors General/Commissioners, conducting of TRS was identified as one of the priorities and was endorsed.

10. The third presentation on "Results of Time Release Study (TRS) Research" was made by Ms. Soe Soe Lwin, Deputy Director, MCD. She informed that based on the Master Plan on ASEAN connectivity, the ASEAN Customs DGs agreed on the ACH and in the April 2011 meeting of the ASEAN-Japan Customs DGs, the priorities for Customs that were agreed are:

Contributions from ACEs

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- RKC
- Risk Management
- AEO
- National Single Window
- TRS

ASEAN Member States agreed to conduct TRS with the aid of WCO TRS Guide between 2012 to 2015. With this background, MCD established the TRS Working Group and with the assistance from ADB, JICA and WCO planned the TRS. The objective and scope of the TRS were presented. The key results were tabulated as key performance indicators using the main markers, namely, arrival to lodgment; lodgment to release; release to removal and arrival to removal. In addition, details of Customs performance in terms of Customs processes were also measured.

11. The fourth and last presentation was made by Mr. Shuihei Ueno, Chief Advisor for MCD and JICA expert from Japan Customs. He presented Japan's experience of TRS and spoke on its objectives, methodologies and the results of the 10th TRS conducted by Japan in 2012. The TRS over the years have enabled Japan Customs to carry out structural reforms, measure the progress of trade facilitation and the effectiveness of measures introduced for Trade Facilitation. Mr. Ueno also gave a brief overview of the Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) which is being developed with assistance of JICA for the MCD. MACCS would support online filing and processing of declarations as well as e-payment. It would involve linkages between cargo information and declaration information and the various players involved in import/export and trade logistics would use MACCS. It would also pave way for National Single Window. It is expected to become functional by 2016.

12. Recommendations made by MCD

As a mid-term initiative, it is recommended that MCD roll out the Myanmar Automated Customs Clearance system (MACCS) as soon as possible.

In the short term, the following proposals are recommended:

- 1). Introduction of risk management- At the Yangon airport warehouse and at Muse all goods (100%) were examined.
- 2). Pre-arrival lodgement of Customs declarations - Although this not provided for in Myanmar Customs law, it is in practice at the Muse/Ruili border post where Customs declarations are registered, checked, appraised and the duty paid before the arrival of the goods at the border so long as all the necessary documents are submitted to the Customs. This was recommended for the other locations also.
- 3). Taking the computer unit function outside the customs processes - When a Customs declaration is submitted, it is registered, checked and appraised manually and then sent to the computer unit for keying in the particulars relating to the goods description, tariff code, duty amount, etc. Once all the particulars are keyed, the declaration file is sent to the cashier's section for payment of duty and onwards to examination and release. At the AWPT, this process has taken a mean time of 13 hours and 51 minutes. At the Muse border post this process has taken 1 day 11 hours and 9 minutes. As this is a statistical function this could be done after release and clearance of goods as is being done at Yangon Airport Warehouse.

Contributions from ACEs

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- 4). Pre-arrival clearance - Customs declaration could be registered, checked, appraised and the duty paid and if there is no risk (green channel) and the release order could be issued before the goods arrive into the territory.
- 5). Introduction of audit based controls
- 6). Introduction of Authorized Economic Operator concept

13. Conclusion: The Exit conference was well organised and the MCD were very frank about the challenges faced. They informed that there were some gaps in the understanding of the TRS team about some of the processes at an operational level. The TRS team were not aware of the pre-arrival lodgement process followed at Muse. The TRS Working group found that although the stake holders were informed of the TRS, their staff was not aware of it. This created a little confusion on the first day of TRS. Similarly some Customs officers were also not aware of what to do with the survey forms as the core staff that was trained in data collection did not pass on this information to their colleagues thereby resulting in some data not filled in the survey forms. MCD is in the process of reform and modernization of the Customs and are in the process of carrying out legislative changes and automation. At the conference it was announced that the next TRS could be done in 2017 as by 2016 the automation of the customs (MACCS) would become operational. The MCD expressed their gratitude to WCO, ADB and JICA for the assistance in conducting the TRS and informed that many important lessons were learnt.



Future Events

February 2015 – Onwards (Indicative)

| Event Name | Timing | Venue |
|---|---------------------|--|
| ➤ Regional Integrity Workshop , | 5 February 2015 | Melbourne, Australia |
| ➤ 16th Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference | 6 February 2015 | Melbourne, Australia |
| ➤ WCO Regional Workshop on Risk Management (Intelligence Management) | 9-13 February 2015 | Hong Kong, China |
| ➤ ROCB/RTC/VC Meeting | 19-20 February 2015 | Brussels, Belgium |
| ➤ Capacity Building Committee Meeting | 23-25 February 2015 | Brussels, Belgium |
| ➤ WCO Global Accreditation Workshop on PCA | 2-6 March 2015 | Brussels, Belgium |
| ➤ WCO National Workshop on RKC for Tonga | 9-13 March 2015 | Nuku'alofa, Tonga |
| ➤ ADB SASEC Customs Sub-Committee Meeting | 11-12 March 2015 | Goa, India |
| ➤ WCO Regional Workshop on Strategic Initiatives for Trade Facilitation | 16-18 March 2015 | Jakarta, Indonesia |
| ➤ WCO National Workshop on Laboratory for Cambodia | 23-27 March 2015 | Phnom Penh, Cambodia |
| ➤ UNESCAP Meeting on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation | 1-3 April 2015 | Bangkok, Thailand |
| ➤ WCO Regional Workshop on Risk Management for Environment | 6-10 April 2015 | Melacca, Malaysia |
| ➤ WCO Sub-Regional Workshop on Customs Valuation | 13-17 April 2015 | Faridabad, India |
| ➤ WCO Regional IPR Dialogue | 20-22 April 2015 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia |
| ➤ WCO-ICAO Regional Workshop on Air Cargo Security | 28-30 April 2015 | Bangkok, Thailand |
| ➤ ASEAN DGs Meeting | 19-21 May 2015 | Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam |
| ➤ WCO-UPU Joint Regional Workshop | 19-22 May 2015 | Guangzhou, P.R. of China |
| ➤ WCO Regional Workshop on the Use of PNR | 26-29 May 2015 | Kashiwa, Japan |

NB: Official invitations will be circulated in due course.