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In this issue:

- Welcome Message from Mr. Takeru Yamazaki
- Farewell Message from Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha

Foreword

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of the ROCB A/P Newsletter!

As we navigate an increasingly dynamic international trade environment, the need for robust, forward-looking, and sustainable Customs capacity building has never been greater. Over the past months, ROCB A/P has continued to engage with Member Administrations, international organizations, development partners, and regional stakeholders to advance WCO Capacity Building and technical assistance across the Asia/Pacific region.

The main highlight of this period was **the 24th Meeting of the Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Centres (RTCs)**, held from 29th September to 1st October 2026 in Melaka, Malaysia. Organized by ROCB A/P and co-hosted by the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) and RTC Malaysia (AKMAL), the meeting provided an important platform for shaping the future direction of regional Customs training and capacity building.



A central focus of our discussions was how to put the WCO's New Capacity Building Paradigm into practice, with its emphasis on impact-oriented, needs-based, and sustainable assistance. Building on discussions at the WCO Capacity Building Committee (CBC), delegates engaged in constructive dialogue on how to strengthen the entire capacity building cycle, from needs assessment and planning to implementation, follow-up, and impact assessment. The key insights and recommendations from the meeting were consolidated and submitted to the WCO Secretariat as regional input. We hope that these contributions will help inform the further development and implementation of the WCO's capacity building approach, ensuring that the priorities and practical experiences of the Asia/Pacific region are reflected in the WCO's global efforts.



Moderators of the discussion session at the 24th RTC Heads Meeting

Beyond the substantive discussions, the meeting was made especially memorable by the warm hospitality of our Malaysian hosts.



Set against the rich historical backdrop of Melaka, overlooking the Strait of Malacca—a historic crossroads of global trade—the venue provided an inspiring setting for professional exchange, networking, and cultural understanding.



On behalf of ROCB A/P and all delegates, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to RMCD and AKMAL for their warm hospitality, excellent organization, and dedicated support in making the meeting a success.

Alongside the RTC Heads Meeting, ROCB A/P has continued to advance another pillar of our Strategic Action Plan: further enhancing collaboration with development partners. We believe that stronger partnerships enable us to combine complementary expertise, mobilize resources, and respond more effectively to the evolving needs of our Member Administrations. Please look at the main body of this newsletter for recent activities which illustrate how we are putting this priority into practice.

Finally, I am pleased to introduce Mr. Takeru Yamazaki, who has recently joined ROCB A/P as a Program Manager seconded from Japan Customs. Mr. Yamazaki brings extensive experience, ranging from frontline passenger and cargo clearance at Tokyo Customs to international cooperation and policy planning at Japan Customs. With his expertise, proactive approach, and enthusiasm, I am confident that he will make valuable contributions to our work. As we welcome Mr. Yamazaki, I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha for her dedication and valuable contributions to ROCB A/P. Her commitment and support have been greatly appreciated, and I wish her every success in her future endeavours.



With fresh perspectives and renewed energy, ROCB A/P remains fully committed to serving all Member Administrations in the Asia/Pacific region. We will continue working closely with our Members and partners to deliver impactful and sustainable support that responds to evolving operational needs and contributes to the long-term development of Customs capacity.

Thank you for your continued support for ROCB A/P.

Together, we advance!



Jun TAJIMA

Head of WCO ROCB A/P

Contents

Workshops and Meetings

ROCB A/P and ADB Discuss Closer Collaboration to Support the South Asia Region 1

ROCB A/P and GIZ Explore Cooperation on Circular Economy and Green Customs Initiatives 2

The Virtual Working Group on Experts 3

ROCB A/P meeting with Ms. Suntareeya Twichaprasit, Deputy Director General of Thai Customs Department 4

ROCB A/P joins Leaning Event for SASEC Customs Officials organized by ADB 5

ROCB A/P and French Embassy Customs Attachés Strengthen Regional Capacity Building Cooperation 6

ROCB A/P participated in the APPU Postal Business Forum 2026 7

24th WCO Asia/Pacific RTC Heads Meeting held in Melaka, Malaysia 9

Staff Update

Welcome Message from Mr. Takeru Yamazaki 11

Farewell Message from Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha 12

Workshops and Meetings

ROCB A/P and ADB Discuss Closer Collaboration to Support the South Asia Region

9th July 2026, Online Meeting



ROCB A/P participated in an online meeting with the South Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 9th July 2026 to explore opportunities for further cooperation in supporting Customs administrations across the South Asia Members.

The ADB team included Mr. Yurendra Basnett, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, and Mr. Satish Reddy, Regional Trade Facilitation Expert.

From ROCB A/P, Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Mr. Takeru Yamazaki, Program Manager for South Asia, took part in the meeting.

Mr. Tajima opened the meeting by acknowledging the history of collaboration between the two organisations. He provided an overview of the role and functions of ROCB A/P, including its capacity-building approach. He emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding

Members' needs and information-sharing with stakeholders like the ADB in order to implement impactful and sustainable capacity-building activities.

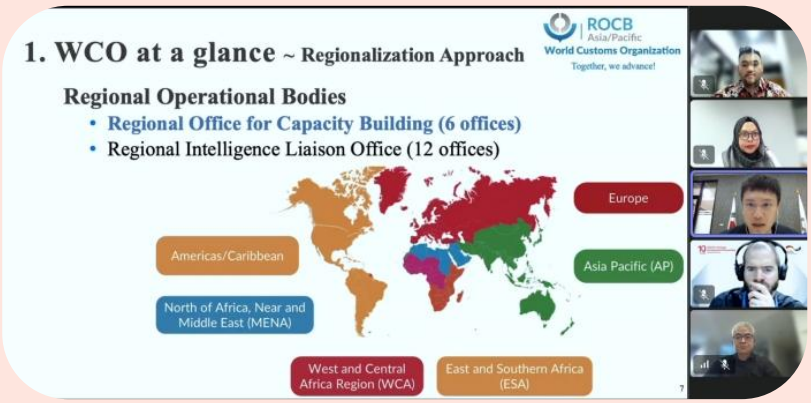
Mr. Yamazaki, who recently assumed the role of Program Manager for South Asia, introduced himself and shared his previous experience in the field of Customs technical cooperation.

Mr. Yurendra and Mr. Satish of the ADB provided an overview of the SASEC Customs Subgroup Meeting hosted by the Secretariat of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). They welcomed the future participation of ROCB A/P representatives in working group meetings to support Customs Administrations in their capacity development and noted that ADB and ROCB A/P are well positioned to provide mutually complementary support to South Asian Members.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to maintain close communication and to explore practical avenues for strengthening collaboration in support of Customs Capacity Building efforts across the South Asia region.

ROCB A/P and GIZ Explore Cooperation on Circular Economy and Green Customs Initiatives

16th July 2026, Bangkok, Thailand



The Regional Office for Capacity Building for Asia/Pacific (ROCB A/P) held an introductory online meeting with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to discuss potential collaboration under the ASEAN-German Regional Project on the circular economy (TRACE).

The meeting, led by representatives from ROCB A/P including Mr. Jun Tajima, Mr. Mark Ho, and Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha, focused on aligning their efforts to support ASEAN Members in advancing trade-related aspects of the circular economy, particularly through

capacity building on Green Customs, Basel Convention compliance, and related trade facilitation measures.

GIZ is implementing the “Promotion of trade-related aspects for circular economy in ASEAN (TRACE)” project, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Running from June 2025 to May 2029, the project builds on a decade-long partnership between Germany and ASEAN.

Planned activities feature policy briefs on transboundary waste control, Green Customs training, circular supply chain workshops, and innovative tools like VR for container inspections. While regional in scope across all 11 ASEAN Members, the project places strategic emphasis on Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

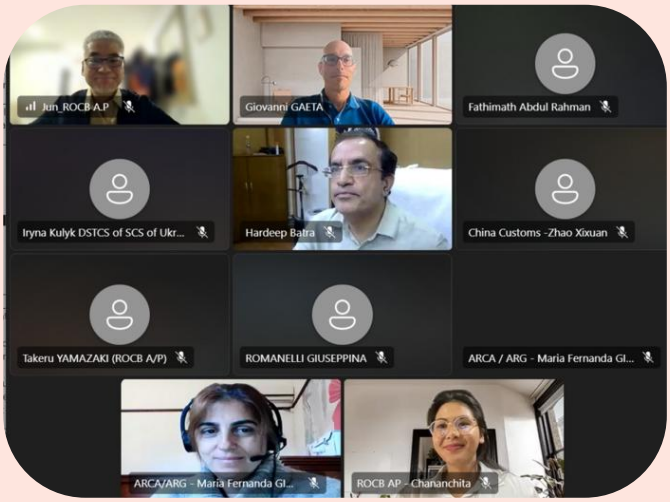
Both sides expressed strong interest in closer collaboration to avoid duplication and maximize impact. ROCB A/P offered to share information on its activities, enabling more effective training and workshops. GIZ can approach ROCB A/P regarding WCO projects and share their knowledge and updates on bodies like the ASEAN Customs Capacity Building Working Group (CCWG).

ROCB A/P will continue supporting members through tailored technical assistance and knowledge-sharing opportunities. This introductory discussion marks a promising step toward partnership between ROCB A/P and GIZ, contributing to more efficient, environmentally responsible Customs practices across the Asia/Pacific region.

The Virtual Working Group on Experts

29th July 2026, Online Meeting

The Virtual Working Group on Experts met on 29th July 2026. Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P; Mr. Takeru Yamazaki, Program Manager; and Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha, Acting Program Manager, attended the meeting.



During the session, Accredited Customs Experts (ACE) and stakeholders joined the discussion led by the Chairperson and the WCO Secretariat on how to ensure the effective and efficient deployment of ACEs and how to maintain their performance as expected, in line with the WCO Capacity Building Paradigm.

Mr. Tajima took the floor and presented the latest figures for 2025/26, showing that all workshops in which ROCB A/P was involved utilised ACEs. He also emphasized the importance of National Contact Points in promoting experts so that talented experts are not left behind, by ensuring effective communication with the WCO. In this regard, he proposed that the ROCB could take a more proactive role by contacting Member administrations to encourage and facilitate the "reactivation" of their experts.

He also echoed a WG member's comment that ensuring transparency in the selection process of ACEs for a mission is important. The Working Group will continue the discussion and await more opinions from stakeholders. In this context, ROCB A/P will continue contributing to the WCO's efforts in a manner that the region's interests are appropriately reflected.

ROCB A/P meeting with Ms. Suntareeya Twichaprasit, Deputy Director General of Thai Customs Department



24th August 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, paid a visit to Ms. Suntareeya Twichaprasit, Deputy Director-General of the Thai Customs Department to introduce the work of ROCB and to enhance cooperation on capacity building.

During the meeting, ROCB A/P provided an overview of the WCO and the office, as well as recent policies and initiatives such as the New Capacity Building Paradigm of the WCO, which emphasises needs assessment, WCO expert-led delivery by WCO Accredited Experts, and impact assessment, among others. New procedures for the WCO Needs Survey and workshops were explained as key ROCB A/P initiatives, as well as "Member Profiles" as an institutional record, and

“Regional Efforts on the Implementation of International Standards in the Asia-Pacific Region” with Members recognising their importance.

The discussion highlighted the robust partnership between the Thai Customs Department and the ROCB A/P, reaffirming their shared dedication to enhancing regional capacity-building initiatives under the WCO framework.

ROCB A/P joins Leaning Event for SASEC Customs Officials organized by ADB

18th August 2026, Online Meeting



On 18th August 2026, the Learning Event for the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), supported by the Asian Development Bank, was held in a hybrid format in Malé, Maldives. Senior Customs officials from South Asia participated in person to discuss the digital future of regional trade.

From ROCB A/P, Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Mr. Takeru Yamazaki, Program Manager for South Asia, joined the event online as observers.

Ms. Fathimath Dhiyana, Commissioner General of Maldives Customs Service, chaired the meeting and delivered the opening remarks, emphasizing the importance of sustained regional cooperation. Mr. Yurendra Basnett, ADB’s Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist for South Asia, served as co-chair of the meeting.

The discussions focused on applying advanced data analytics to enhance operational effectiveness. The sessions provided a common understanding of how the effective use and exchange of data can support faster and better-coordinated operations, contributing to seamless trade processes and stronger border protection.

Speakers from academia and the private sector delivered presentations on AI-based decision-support systems and trade-related data-exchange platforms. These sessions

underscored the potential of integrating artificial intelligence into customs risk management and highlighted the importance of establishing secure, interoperable frameworks for seamless cross-border data exchange.

In the final session, Members presented their national perspectives and shared practical experiences regarding their use of digital technology. Delegates discussed both the achievements and challenges of implementing these advanced technologies, such as AI-driven cargo scanning and automated classification systems.

The event concluded with a shared vision of a digitally connected SASEC region and reaffirmed the importance of moving toward paperless customs operations to facilitate secure and efficient trade across the region.

ROCB A/P and French Embassy Customs Attachés Strengthen Regional Capacity Building Cooperation



25th August 2026 Bangkok, Thailand

The Regional Office for Capacity Building for Asia/Pacific (ROCB A/P) held a productive meeting with the Customs Attachés of the Embassy of France in Bangkok to exchange information on capacity-building activities and explore opportunities for synergy across the region.

The meeting, led by Mr. Jun Tajima of ROCB A/P, together with his colleagues, Mr. Mark Ho and Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha, focused on aligning efforts to support Customs administrations in ASEAN and neighbouring countries. Discussions covered programmes in areas such as detection dog (canine) training, officer exchange initiatives, e-commerce and intellectual property rights (IPR) enforcement, and environmental compliance, including plastic and hazardous waste management.

Representing the French side were Mr. Patrick Mihoub, Customs Attaché for Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and Ms. Audrey

Hoffmann, Deputy Customs Attaché. The French Customs Attaché network plays an important role in delivering technical cooperation and capacity-building support throughout Southeast Asia.

Key topics included French experience in building autonomous canine units, best practices in dog-handler cohabitation, and potential collaboration on profiling, X-ray analysis, and officer exchanges at major airports. Both sides also reviewed plans for e-commerce and IPR-related workshops in the Asia/Pacific region. The French team shared its experience and indicated readiness to explore joint or complementary initiatives with other Customs authorities.

Both sides expressed strong interest in closer coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize the impact of capacity-building activities for Member administrations. ROCB A/P shared updates on its work under the WCO's evolving framework and offered to continue exchanging information on regional needs and planned activities.

ROCB A/P will continue supporting Members through tailored technical assistance and knowledge-sharing opportunities. This meeting marks a positive step toward enhanced partnership between ROCB A/P and the French Customs Attaché network, contributing to stronger, more coordinated Customs capacity building across the Asia/Pacific region.

ROCB A/P participated in the APPU Postal Business Forum 2026

31st August – 1st September 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Takeru Yamazaki, representing the WCO ROCB A/P, was invited to participate in the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) Postal Business Forum 2026 held from 31st August to 1st September in Bangkok, Thailand.

The forum gathered key stakeholders from postal administrations and relevant private-sector partners from across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Discussions on Day 1 focused on the evolving postal ecosystem, the application of AI and digital technologies in postal operations, and the growing complexity of cross-border e-commerce, customs procedures, and trade facilitation.

Postal operators and private-sector representatives shared practical experiences on the rapid expansion of e-commerce flows, the growing importance of data quality and compliance—

including HS classification and emerging regulatory requirements—and the use of digital tools to enhance transparency and security.

Throughout the sessions, participants widely recognized the need for interoperable systems among postal operators, customs administrations, airlines, and private-sector partners to ensure secure, predictable, and efficient cross-border movements.

The CEOs Forum on Day 2 brought together leaders from postal administrations across the Asia-Pacific region. They exchanged good practices, discussed operational and regulatory challenges, and reflected on the future postal ecosystem.

Speakers emphasized that postal operations in the Asia-Pacific region are uniquely positioned to lead global transformation by advancing innovation and AI-driven optimization.

The Forum further underscored the need to reinforce responses to the surge in cross-border e-commerce, particularly through improved data governance and closer cooperation between posts and Customs administrations.

ROCB A/P will continue to work with APPU to support enhanced cooperation between postal operators and Customs administrations, particularly in addressing the surge in e-commerce, and to contribute to secure and efficient border management.



24th WCO Asia/Pacific RTC Heads Meeting held in Melaka, Malaysia

29th September – 1st October 2026, Melaka, Malaysia



The 24th Meeting of the Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Centres (RTCs) was held from 29th September to 1st October 2026 in Melaka, Malaysia. The event was organized by the Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P) and co-hosted by the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) and RTC Malaysia (AKMAL). It brought together the Heads of RTCs from across the Asia-Pacific region, together with representatives from the WCO Secretariat, the Asia/Pacific Vice-Chair's Office, and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P).

The meeting opened with a strong emphasis on the critical importance of empowering Customs professionals through high-quality training and human resource development as a foundation for security, national revenue, and economic prosperity. Over three days, RTC leaders shared innovative solutions, recent training developments, and operational strategies aligned with the WCO's 2026 theme: "Customs protecting society through vigilance and commitment."

Key sessions focused on practical efforts to modernize training curricula, incorporate digital tools, and address challenges in strengthening border protection and trade facilitation. Delegates also undertook a site visit to RTC Malaysia (AKMAL), where they observed campus facilities and training demonstrations.

A central highlight of the meeting was the in-depth discussion on operationalizing the WCO's New Capacity Building Paradigm. Participants examined the strategic shift toward impact-focused capacity building. They identified key gaps and challenges, including clearer problem definition at the outset, the need for stronger common understanding between experts and beneficiaries, and robust follow-up systems.

In response, the meeting formulated concrete, actionable strategies across the full capacity-building cycle:

Before workshops: Securing high-level management involvement, joint development of Terms of Reference with measurable outcomes, stakeholder engagement in agenda setting, RTC pre-assessment of knowledge gaps, and nomination of the right participants in positions able to apply the learning.

During workshops: Encouraging active participation and two-way communication, increasing simulation and practical activities, requiring participants to present country reports and gaps, and developing concrete action plans.

After workshops: Conducting follow-up (coaching and workplace application checks), ensuring supervisor evidence of application, and establishing mechanisms within RTCs to cascade knowledge.

Participants also clarified possible quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The results of these discussions will be incorporated into the Compendium of Training Management in the A/P Region in cooperation with Members.

Throughout the meeting, the RTCs reaffirmed their evolving role as proactive centres that drive sustainable operational improvement. ROCB A/P continues to serve as the regional hub for capacity building, facilitating coordination and maximizing the collective contribution of the RTC network across the Asia/Pacific region.

The Head of ROCB A/P expressed appreciation for the active engagement of all participants and the warm hospitality of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department and RTC Malaysia. The productive exchanges on the New Capacity Building Paradigm and impact-focused approaches are expected to guide future regional capacity-building efforts. Continued collaboration remains essential to strengthen the Asia-Pacific Customs community.

Staff Updates

Welcome Message from Mr. Takeru Yamazaki



Greetings colleagues,

My name is Takeru Yamazaki, and I am delighted to join the WCO ROCB/AP as a Programme Manager.

I come from Japan Customs, and it is a great honor and privilege to become a member of such a diverse and talented team dedicated to supporting Customs capacity-building across the Asia-Pacific region.

Regarding my professional background, I began my career at Tokyo Customs, where I worked in both passenger and cargo clearance operations. After five years at Tokyo Customs, I joined the International Division of the Customs and Tariff Bureau of the Ministry of Finance of Japan.

In that role, I was involved in international cooperation and policy research, including the study of Customs systems and related developments in other Customs administrations.

I also coordinated Customs technical cooperation programmes with countries in Africa and the Middle East, particularly through the organization of workshops and capacity-building activities for partner Customs administrations. In addition, I worked on Japan Customs' cooperation within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and participated in meetings of the Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP) as a member of the Japan Customs delegation.

I hope to make the best use of my experience and knowledge to further strengthen cooperation, collaboration, and capacity-building efforts among Customs administrations across the Asia-Pacific region.

As I begin this exciting new chapter, I look forward to working closely with colleagues and partners throughout the region and contributing to our shared goals.

Takeru Yamazaki

Farewell Message from Ms. Chananchita Rueng-O-Cha



As I reflect on my year at the Regional Office for Capacity Building Asia/Pacific (ROCB A/P), I would like to express my earnest gratitude towards all who made this journey a remarkable one.

First and foremost, my sincere appreciation goes to the Thai Customs Department for granting me the invaluable opportunity to be seconded to the ROCB A/P. Serving in this position has been a privilege and a significant highlight of my professional journey.

Throughout the year, I had excellent opportunities to participate in various meetings and workshops, which broadened my horizons and expanded my knowledge in areas I had not previously explored. In addition, the chance to contribute and collaborate on ROCB A/P initiatives and several key publications has been incredibly fulfilling. I truly hope these resources continue to benefit all member administrations and partners in the years to come.

My time in the office has provided me with invaluable experience, knowledge, and ways of thinking that I will carry forward in my career. Beyond the professional achievements, what I cherish most is the warm friendship, teamwork, and genuine thoughtfulness we shared every day.

The international friendships that grew and strengthened during my time here are priceless, and I will hold them close to my heart.

Although my tenure here was short, every moment was meaningful and deeply memorable.

I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all Customs administrations and colleagues across the Asia/Pacific region for continued growth, success, good health, and happiness.

Thank you once again for an unforgettable year!

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