



ROCB E-newsletter No.88

Asia/Pacific

World Customs Organization



In this issue:

- 📌 Farewell message from Mr. Louis CHAN
- 📌 Welcome message from Mr. Mark HO

Foreword

Dear Readers,

Greetings from the ROCB.

April is a special season for many of countries in A/P Region.

It is a new year season for Mekong Region, and lots of cities celebrate it with water-pouring traditions, which symbolise cleansing and purification. The name is derived from the Sanskrit word "saṃkrānti", meaning "astrological passage". The washing ritual, where people pour water over Buddha images to purge impurities, is still practised widely. In the past, children are said to pour water to purify their parents with lime water. Nowadays, the water is poured on the hands or feet of elderly.



My colleague Ms. Op and I celebrating new year

This festival was inscribed in UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2023. Like every UNESCO site, the festival attracts tourists from all over the world, as this ritual turned people enjoy splashing water to passers-by, and my family and I also enjoy that one-of-a-kind event. I enjoyed shooting some of the tourist who enjoy being shot at! ... of course, I will be dripping wet after that. It was bit strange to feel some solidarity with total strangers, having the same delight together.



Eid al-Fitr this year was in April. I shared a joy with Muslim colleagues and friends who celebrated this holy event. I am looking forward to witnessing the event sometime in the future

The Easter was on third Sunday of April this year. I exchanged the happiness with my friends of the Pacific. However, it is sad to know that the Pope Francis has passed away during somewhat diverse sentiment of the society in some parts of the globe. I hope all the mankind despite of any differences can join hands together for the happiness, prosperity and safety of the world.

This issue of ROCB A/P E-Newsletter features our activities undertaken from January through March 2025. A bright news is that the ROCB welcomed a new officer, Mr. Mark Ho, seconded from Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department. He started his career as a Customs Inspector who served in different areas of Customs work including air cargo selection and examination, excise compliance and audit for bonded warehouse and passenger processing at land boundary. His knowledge and experiences surely help enhance the work of the ROCB in the years to come.

By the way, I share activities of the ROCB A/P in my personal account on LinkedIn. Please do take a glance of it at <www.linkedin.com/in/jun-tajima-53327146>. Being non-tech middle-age, utilising social media is bit of a challenge, but I really hope the readers enjoy some updates at your hand.

Last but not least, please rest assured that all of the ROCB A/P staffs remain committed to serve the Region and its Members.

Thank you.

Handwritten signature in Japanese characters, reading '田島 潤' (Tajima Jun).

Jun TAJIMA

Head of ROCB A/P

Contents

Workshops and Meetings

Visit and meeting with Japan Customs executives	1
Visit and meeting with RILO Asia-Pacific	2
ROCB A/P Engages in a Productive Online Meeting with ASEAN Secretariat	3
Capacity Building Program on Cross-border Paperless Trade and Digital Trade Facilitation for BIMSTEC	5
Customs Attaché of the Netherlands Visits ROCB A/P	6
ROCB AP extends support to RTC Cambodia	7
ROCB A/P Attends the 43 rd Session of the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin	8
New Director from Korea Customs Service Visits ROCB A/P	9
Customs Attaché of France Visits ROCB A/P	10
The Global Meeting of the Regional Entities established by the WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices	12
ROCB A/P attended the 16 th session of the Capacity Building Committee	14
Strengthening Anti-Corruption Efforts in the Asia Pacific: Key Takeaways from the 24 th WCO Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC) Session	15
Visit and meeting with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)	17
ROCB A/P visits to Royal Malaysia Customs Department and AKMAL Melaka	18
Enhancing Global Customs Enforcement: Insights from the 45 th WCO Enforcement Committee Session	19
WCO Organizes Regional Workshop on Data Analytics in the Asia/Pacific Region	21

Staff Updates

Farewell message from Mr. Louis Chan	23
Welcome message from Mr. Mark HO	24

Workshops and Meetings

Visit and meeting with Japan Customs executives

15th January 2025, Tokyo, Japan



Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, CCF/Japan Operation Manager and Program Manager, visited Mr. Yasuo Takamura, Director-General of Japan Customs, on the sidelines of a meeting in Japan.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Tajima showed his appreciation to Japan Customs for its contributions to the WCO and the ROCB A/P for both financial means and human resources. During the meeting, Mr. Tajima gave an overview of the ROCB A/P and its activities including the Training Management Project of the WCO, thanking him for its support to the Project as well. He also showed the draft Compendium on Training Management as its outcome.

Mr. Takamura recognised ROCB A/P's long-standing contribution in the Asia Pacific Region and encouraged it to continue being a valuable resource for both Members and the WCO.

Visit and meeting with RILO Asia-Pacific

15th January 2025, Tokyo, Japan

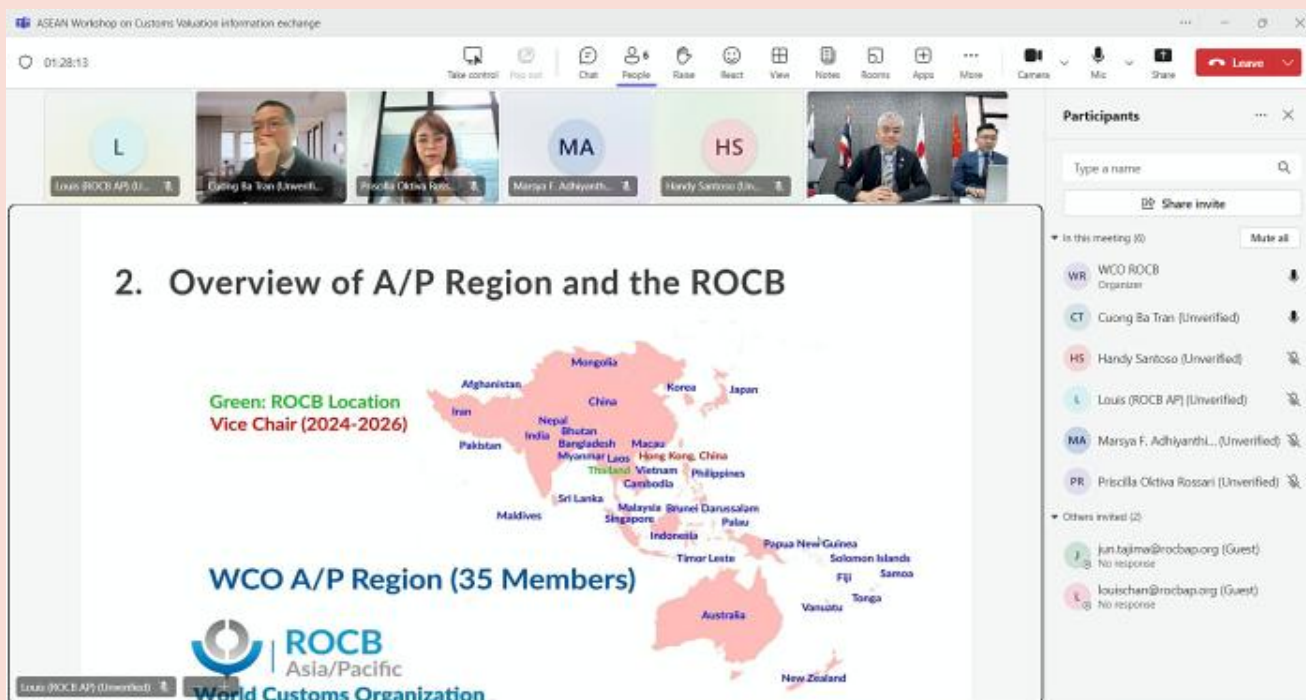


Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, CCF/Japan Operation Manager and Program Manager, visited RILO A/P in Tokyo, Japan on the sidelines of a series of meetings in Japan. Mr. Toshihiko Osawa and Ms. Yuko Watanabe kindly welcomed the ROCB A/P.

During the meeting, Mr. Tajima shared recent capacity building activities in the Asia Pacific Region including the annual needs survey that Japan Customs and ROCB A/P is jointly conducting, which is tasked by the Regional Strategic Plan of the WCO A/P Region. Mr. Tajima requested RILO A/P for future information exchange on Members regarding intelligence in order for the WCO to provide more targeted assistances with Members Administrations. They discussed future capacity building activities in the A/P region by both organisations including the new initiatives of the WCO and RILO A/P “Data/Intelligence Professionals Programme”. Both parties confirmed to continue strengthening collaboration in the Region especially on capacity building activities such as the ways to improve support for Customs Administrations in the region.

ROCB A/P Engages in a Productive Online Meeting with ASEAN Secretariat

22nd January 2025, Online Meeting



At the invitation of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), ROCB A/P participated in an online meeting on 22nd January 2025. The primary objective of the meeting was to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations and align efforts to enhance customs capacity-building and trade facilitation across ASEAN members.

The ASEC delegation was led by Mr. Cuong Ba Tran, Head of the Trade Facilitation Division, while representing ROCB A/P were Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P and Mr. Louis Chan, Program Manager.

Opening the session, Mr. Tajima highlighted ROCB A/P's mission to support AMS through the implementation of WCO conventions, capacity-building initiatives, and promotion of international customs standards. He emphasized the importance of reducing duplication in technical assistance and ensuring alignment with ASEAN's strategic priorities.

In response, Mr. Cuong Ba Tran shared ASEC's capacity-building framework, which focuses on engaging dialogue partners—including Australia, Japan, China, and Korea—to provide targeted technical assistance. He also elaborated on the development of the new Strategic Plans of Customs Development for 2026-30 which would incorporate emerging issues, including circular economy, green customs, digitalization, e-commerce, and combating illicit trade. ASEC also

presented the Joint Customs Control (JCC) mechanism as a successful initiative for addressing drug trafficking and illicit trade in the region.

Mr. Louis Chan provided an overview of ROCB A/P's recent capacity-building activities and ongoing WCO initiatives. He discussed workshops conducted on risk management, intellectual property rights (IPR), and smart customs, as well as new initiatives such as the WCO's Smart Customs project and the ICCWC's efforts to combat wildlife crime. These efforts underscore the importance of sustainability and digital transformation in customs operations.

The meeting concluded with productive discussions on the need for closer coordination to streamline technical assistance and avoid redundancies, leveraging country coordinators for better alignment of requests with WCO activities. Both parties identified e-commerce fraud, trade facilitation in the digital age, and combating illicit trade as priority areas for enhanced collaboration, with ASEC expressing interest in inviting WCO experts to ASEAN Customs Coordination Working Group (CCWG) meetings for technical discussions. The meeting also explored potential support mechanisms for Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN, focusing on strengthening its customs administration and trade facilitation capabilities.

Concluding the session, Mr. Tajima expressed his appreciation for ASEC's proactive engagement and insights. Both parties agreed to maintain open communication and hold similar discussions in the future to ensure continued alignment and cooperation.

Capacity Building Program on Cross-border Paperless Trade and Digital Trade Facilitation for BIMSTEC

21st - 23rd January 2025, Bangkok, Thailand



At the invitation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), ROCB A/P and the WCO participated in the Capacity Building Program on Cross-border Paperless Trade and Digital Trade Facilitation for BIMSTEC. The participants from the ROCB A/P were Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, along with Program Managers Mr. Jaemin Cho and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu.

The program, organized by ADB in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the BIMSTEC Secretariat, provided an excellent platform for BIMSTEC member countries to strengthen the digital trade landscape across the region by fostering knowledge exchange and enhancing understanding of digital trade measures.

WCO experts Mr. Juan Diego Chavarría (Role of National Single Window for Paperless Trade), Ms. Gordana Vidanović (Cross-border E-commerce), and Mr. Ammar Ahmed Mir (Pakistan Single Window) spoke online on their subjects-matter.

The three-day event covered key topics such as BIMSTEC's Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2030, Digital Trade Policies, WTO TFA, Cross-border Paperless Trade, National Single Window (NSW), and Cross-border E-commerce. A key takeaway was the critical importance of continuous capacity building, particularly in supporting SMEs, women traders, and the digitalization of customs processes.

ROCB A/P continues to strengthening its ties with partner organizations to better understand their activities to seek possible cooperations with them to support Member Administrations.

Customs Attaché of the Netherlands Visits ROCB A/P

30th January 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Guusta Visser, Customs Attaché at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Singapore, paid a courtesy visit to ROCB A/P on 30th January 2025.

During the visit, Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, along with his colleagues, Mr. Louis Chan and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, extended



a warm welcome to Ms. Visser and reaffirmed the strong cooperation between ROCB A/P and Dutch Customs in capacity-building efforts and advancing Customs modernization across the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Tajima provided an overview of ROCB A/P, emphasizing its role in supporting Asia-Pacific Members through capacity-building activities, especially the Annual Needs Survey, which is currently circulated to Members in A/P Region to identify Members' capacity-building needs. He also gave a brief summary of recent WCO's capacity-building activities, including regional and national workshops on risk management, trade facilitation, and enforcement techniques, stressing the importance of such information exchange to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize impact.

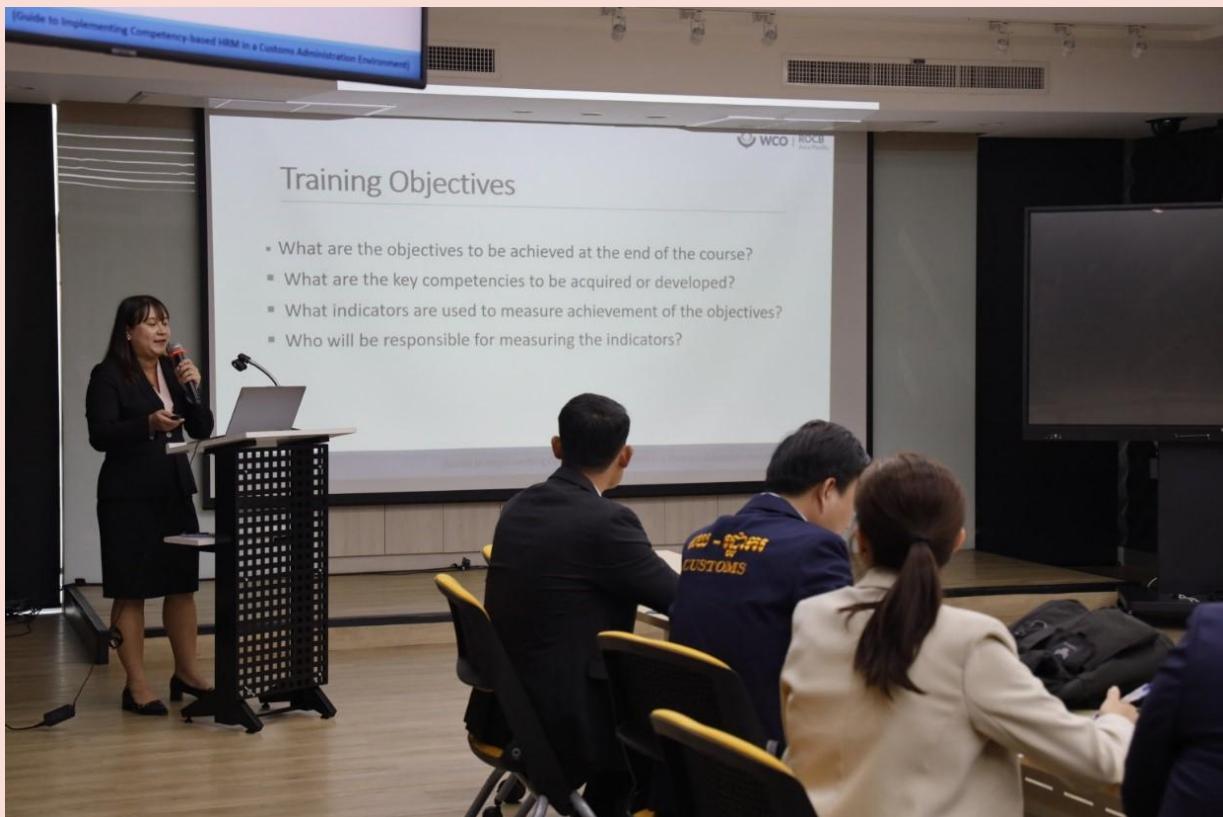
Ms. Visser, who oversees customs collaboration in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, emphasized the Netherlands' commitment to fostering Customs modernization and enforcement cooperation across the region. She highlighted ongoing Netherlands' bilateral collaborative initiatives, including AI-driven risk targeting, product passport development, and canine detection techniques.

The discussions focused on identifying opportunities for Netherlands' bilateral collaborative initiatives and the need for enhancing coordination among Customs stakeholders to strengthen regional engagement and ensure the effective implementation of Customs modernization initiatives.

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to further strengthening cooperation between ROCB A/P and Dutch Customs. Both organizations expressed their willingness to the efficiency in the region through capacity building.

ROCB AP extends support to RTC Cambodia

5th February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand



ROCB A/P has extended its support to newly established WCO Regional Training Center in Cambodia (RTC Cambodia). A meeting came in response to the needs expressed by RTC Cambodia for assistance in enhancing their Regional Training Centre capabilities upon their attendance for their first ROCB / RTC Heads meeting in September 2024.

During the meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand, Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P and Ms. Aksara Mackhawiman, Assistant Program Manager of ROCB A/P met with RTC Cambodia officials representing Cambodia Customs National School to discuss training management strategies.

During the meeting, ROCB A/P introduced WCO Tool on Human Resource Management, highlighting training processes and course development strategy. The key highlight of the discussion was the insights from studies on Member Practices during the WCO Sub-Regional and Regional Workshops on Training Management conducted in 2024, covered several areas of training, including the training process, development of annual training plans, development of standardized course curricula, and school management systems. Those topics are being consolidated into the Compendium of Training Management in A/P Region as the outcome of these Workshops and additional research activities, and will be presented to the Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference in May 2025 in Hong Kong.

As a part of ROCB A/P's commitment to the Asia-Pacific Region, ROCB A/P continue to enhance WCO Member's capabilities. The assistance extended to RTC Cambodia is expected to significantly strengthen Regional Training capabilities through knowledge sharing and collaborative development.

ROCB A/P Attends the 43rd Session of the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin

5th – 7th February 2025, Brussels, Belgium



The 43rd Session of the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin (TCRO) took place in Brussels, Belgium, from February 5th to 7th, 2025. Established in 1995 under Article 4.2 of the WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin, the TCRO holds at least one meeting per year, typically at the WCO headquarters. TCRO focuses on conducting technical reviews to harmonize rules of origin, providing technical advice to member countries, and enhancing clarity in the interpretation and application of regulations.

Mr. Jaemin Cho and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, Program Managers at ROCB A/P, attended as an observer to help establish a foundation for capacity-building activities on rules of origin in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting served as a valuable platform for customs officials and international organizations to discuss key challenges and share best practices in addressing both preferential and non-preferential rules of origin, which remain a critical issue for many Customs Administrations.

During the three-day session, discussions covered a range of important topics, including the interconnectivity framework for certificates of origin, Product-Specific Rules, and issues related to Origin Irregularities. Other key agenda items included initiatives on origin and green customs, origin issues in Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, Amendments to Revised Kyoto Convention Annex K, and WCO-led capacity building activities on rules of origin. Representatives from the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) also participated, providing valuable insights into the latest trends in rules of origin.

New Director from Korea Customs Service Visits ROCB A/P

11th February 2025, Bangkok Thailand

ROCB A/P welcomed a delegation from the Korea Customs Service (KCS) led by Mr. Moon Ki Choi, the newly appointed Director of the International Investigation Division. Accompanied by Customs Attaché Ms. Hyojin Lee, Deputy Director Mr. Jun Hyung Kim, and Investigator Mr. Seung Jae Choi, the delegation met with Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager, to discuss avenues for enhancing collaboration on customs capacity building.

Mr. Tajima extended a warm welcome to the KCS delegation and expressed appreciation for Korea Customs Service's ongoing support, particularly in facilitating the WCO Drug

Enforcement Experts Workshop. Mr. Moon Ki Choi reaffirmed KCS's commitment to initiatives in the area of Customs enforcement and emphasized the importance of cooperation between KCS, ROCB A/P, and RILO A/P. He noted that this collaboration could serve as a model for best practices in drug enforcement, helping Asia-Pacific members improve detection capabilities and update enforcement strategies.

The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their dedication to strengthening cooperation and advancing capacity-building efforts across the region.



Customs Attaché of France Visits ROCB A/P

18th February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Patrick MIHOUB, Customs Attaché at the Embassy of France in Bangkok, along with his colleagues, visited the ROCB A/P Office. Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, together with program managers, formally received the French delegation.

During the visit, Mr. Tajima and his team extended a warm welcome to Mr. MIHOUB and his delegation, emphasizing the potential for enhanced collaboration between ROCB A/P and French Customs to promote capacity building and customs modernization throughout the Asia-Pacific region.



Mr. Tajima presented an overview of ROCB A/P's mission, highlighting its role in supporting Asia-Pacific members through targeted capacity-building initiatives. He emphasized the importance of the Annual Needs Survey in identifying members' specific requirements. Mr. Tajima also summarized recent activities, including regional and sub-regional workshops focusing on integrity, trade facilitation, e-commerce, and HS classification. Additionally, he detailed ROCB A/P's engagement with various WCO projects, including the passenger and cargo control program, and environmental programs, stressing the need for strategic coordination to optimize resource utilization and prevent redundancy.

Mr. MIHOUB, responsible for customs collaboration across Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, articulated France's commitment to advancing customs modernization and fostering robust enforcement cooperation within the region. He outlined the broad scope of activities undertaken by the French Customs post in Bangkok, including technical cooperation, trade facilitation, support for French companies, law enforcement, and intelligence gathering. Mr. MIHOUB highlighted French Customs' expertise in areas such as drug enforcement, tobacco trafficking, and intellectual property rights. Discussions focused on identifying opportunities for synergistic initiatives, including the possibility of French Customs providing expertise in various capacity-building activities. Specific areas of interest included supporting K9 units in Asia and collaborating on container targeting programs. Both

parties acknowledged the importance of leveraging French Customs' extensive experience and knowledge in customs matters.

The visit concluded with a mutual commitment to strengthening cooperation between ROCB A/P and French Customs. Both parties expressed eagerness to explore collaborative ventures that bolster capacity-building efforts and improve customs efficiency across the Asia-Pacific region.

The Global Meeting of the Regional Entities established by the WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices

24th – 25th February 2025, Brussels, Belgium



ROCB A/P participated in the Global Meeting of the Regional Entities established by the WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices, held at WCO headquarter in Brussels from 24th – 25th February 2025. The meeting brought together delegates from Regional Entities around

the world, with both attended in person and online. Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P and his colleagues from ROCB A/P attended the meeting.

In the Regional Entity experience sharing, Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, introduced the development of the Compendium on Training Management in the Asia-Pacific Region, emphasizing how the compendium can contribute to Members.

Also, during the meeting, WCO provided updates its regional entities and discussed ways to enhance member assistance.

[e-Learning]

WCO highlighted the latest advancements in the WCO CLiKC!, including three new courses and updates to five existing ones, with plans for two additional e-learning modules in 2025. We learned that in our Asia Pacific Region, Data Analytics Beginner Course and Post-Clearance Audit were the most completed courses in 2024. The meeting also included an evaluation summary of the tenant solution pilot, which dedicated area on CLiKC! exclusively for a particular Member administration. Additionally, WCO provided updated on the progress of WCO VR training project focusing on Air Cargo Clearance.

[WCO Tool]

WCO introduced a new tool 'Good Practices and Challenges of the WCO Regional Customs Laboratories', which was developed in response to Members' request for a comprehensive assessment/diagnostic instrument to evaluate regional entities. the Tariff and Trade Directorate, in cooperation with the Regional Customs Laboratories, drafted the Self-assessment tool for Reginal Customs Laboratories (RCL) to assist RCLs to assess compliance on what is expected to deliver as a regional entity.

[New Capacity-Building Paradigm]

The new WCO capacity-building paradigm was presented at the meeting. WCO outlined its overall strategic direction and focus that align with the WCO Theme for 2025, "Customs delivering on its commitment to efficiency, security and prosperity".

In the breakout session, delegates were invited to discuss over the topics on increasing the ability of regional entities to be a force multiplier for capacity building. ROCB A/P collected valuable feedback regarding our work. These insights will be applied to our works to better serve WCO Members in the AP region. Ms. Grace Ye and Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Managers of the

ROCB A/P, used this opportunity to demonstrate how ROCB A/P can contribute to WCO's new paradigm and discussed our collaborative efforts with other stakeholders in the AP region.

ROCB A/P attended the 16th session of the Capacity Building Committee

26th – 28th February 2025, Brussels, Belgium

The 16th session of the Capacity Building Committee was held in Brussels from 26th – 28th February 2025, bringing delegates from around the world both in person and virtually. This year the meeting was held under the theme of 'Reimagining the WCO Capacity-Building Paradigm – Thriving with Strategic Purpose and Resource Optimization'. Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P and his ROCB A/P colleagues attended the meeting.

ROCB A/P reported to the Committee on the progress of the Compendium on Training Management in Asia-Pacific Region. ROCB A/P successfully conducted 3 Sub-Regional Workshops and 1 Regional Workshop throughout the A/P region in 2024, compiling good practices and challenges from AP Members. During the report, the ROCB A/P highlighted how the ROCB can contribute to as a bridge between the WCO and Members: making a Compendium that connects the WCO Tools that could be too advanced to apply, with neighbouring Members' practices which can be more achievable. This compendium was highly regarded by Members attended the CBC; it will be present to the Head of Customs Administration Conference of A/P Region in May 2025.

The Committee were presented the new capacity building paradigm and it align with the WCO Theme for 2025, "Customs delivering on its commitment to efficiency, security and prosperity" and were provided information on the outcomes of the self-assessment phase of the 1st cycle of the Performance Measurement Mechanism (PMM) and the WCO Expert Management and Accreditation policy. During the Secretariat's presentation on the Implementing the WCO Distance Learning Strategy, Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, Program Manager, made an intervention on the ROCB A/P's active role in encouraging Members in leveraging e-learning platform, and Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager, commented on Virtual Reality Training (VRT), and the updates on the WCO Data strategic initiatives including the BACUDA Project, and the Smart Customs Project about ROCB A/P's active involvement.

Another key topic was the new WCO Regionalization approach with a view to the roles and responsibilities of the regional entities in the new WCO capacity-building paradigm. During the meeting, ROCB A/P demonstrated our support to the WCO through various approaches, including organized the workshops, and actively participating in the meeting to remain updates with the WCO initiatives and updates the Members.

In the Gender Equality and Diversity sessions, Ms. Grace Ye, Program Manager, ROCB A/P highlighted its role in promoting these initiatives. As Ms. Aksara Mackhawiman, Assistant Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, serves as a regional focal point for the GED, we regularly attend the Virtual Working Group and the Global Conferences to stay updates on the policy development.

As WCO adopting its modernization and capacity building initiatives, ROCB A/P continues to leverage our regional expertise and active involvement to support WCO in achieving the strategic goals and provide support to Members in the Asia Pacific Region.

Strengthening Anti-Corruption Efforts in the Asia Pacific: Key Takeaways from the 24th WCO Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC) Session

3rd - 4th March, 2025, Brussels, Belgium

The 24th session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC), held from March 3rd to 4th, 2025, offered an invaluable platform to strengthen the fight against corruption within Customs administrations worldwide. The ROCB A/P is committed to supporting its regional members in enhancing their capacity to combat corruption and promote integrity in Customs operations. This meeting provided critical insights and practical approaches to achieve those goals.



The session was officially opened by WCO Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Treviño, who emphasized the fundamental role that integrity plays in the efficiency and reputation of Customs operations globally.

A key highlight of the session was the keynote by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which discussed the challenges and opportunities in managing corruption risks while improving fiscal transparency and accountability. The session also presented an overview of the progress made under the ISC Work Programme for 2022-2025, with a focus on the development of tools and guidelines to help WCO Members build stronger integrity frameworks. A central focus was the increased application of tools designed to measure integrity and assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. Several WCO members shared their experiences and perspectives on the broader impact of the WCO Anti-Corruption and Integrity Promotion (A-CIP) Programme, emphasizing how it has played a crucial role in fostering a culture of integrity within Customs administrations. During the session, an important discussion focused on the application of rewards and sanctions systems to combat corruption. Customs authorities and the private sector shared valuable perspectives on how transparent and fair reward systems can motivate ethical behavior among Customs officers.

Innovative approaches to breaking the links between crime and corruption were also explored, with a focus on how Customs administrations can use emerging technologies and modern strategies to reduce corruption in trade and transport sectors. This is particularly timely for the Asia Pacific region, where digital transformation is underway and presents an opportunity to embed anti-corruption practices into new technological frameworks.

The session also included two panel discussions. The first, on Data Governance to Mitigate Corruption Risks in Automation, discussed how better data management and automation technologies could reduce the risk of corruption in increasingly digital Customs operations. The second panel, Engaging Staff Unions to Build Cultures of Integrity in Customs, highlighted the importance of collaboration between Customs authorities and staff unions in promoting accountability and trust.

The outcomes of the 24th ISC session will continue to support Customs administrations in the Asia Pacific region as they work to combat corruption, promote transparency, and build more effective Customs systems. By sharing best practices, fostering collaboration, and leveraging the WCO's expertise, we can empower our region to build more transparent, efficient, and ethical Customs systems.

Visit and meeting with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

6th March 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, Mr. Mark Ho, Program Manager, and Ms. Aksara Mackhawiman, Assistant Program Manager, visited the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) at the Canadian Embassy in Bangkok to discuss ongoing collaboration with the WCO and future collaboration opportunities.



The ROCB A/P representatives were warmly welcomed by Mr. Joshua Newby, Regional Director for the Asia-Pacific Region, along with Mr. Greg Fiddy, International Network Manager and Mr. Olivier St-Onge, Liaison Officer. During the meeting, Mr. Jun Tajima delivered a short presentation to introduce ROCB A/P, briefing the latest WCO initiatives and past workshops held in the region. Mr. Jun Tajima emphasized that ROCB A/P would place importance on partnerships and information exchange to avoid duplication.

Mr. Joshua Newby outlined CBSA's recent engagements with countries in Southeast Asia, noting some administrations' specific requests for support in establishing an intelligence unit, enhancing criminal investigation capabilities, improving customs valuation, and providing leadership training for executives. Mr. Joshua Newby also agreed to strengthen information exchange and collaboration with ROCB A/P on existing capacity building activities to avoid duplication and ensure targeted assistance to Member Administrations.

ROCB A/P visits to Royal Malaysia Customs Department and AKMAL Melaka

11th – 12th March 2025, Melaka, Malaysia



11th-12th March 2025, Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, Program Manager of ROCB A/P and Ms. Aksara Mackhawiman, Assistant Program Manager of ROCB A/P visited the Royal Malaysia Customs Department (RMCD) to their training center at AKMAL Melaka to discuss over various topics in Training Management, and the headquarters in Putrajaya to conduct interviews on the WCO Annual Needs Survey for the A/P region to know their situation and their needs in-depth, and also to gain insights that guide future Capacity Building Programme of the WCO.

During the visit to AKMAL, as a research mission of the WCO Training Management Project, ROCB A/P engaged in comprehensive discussion with the representatives from AKMAL Melaka, focusing on several key areas on training management. The discussion covered annual training plan development, designing training course, distant learning, trainer management, and budgeting process of training course. Following the discussions, AKMAL provided us with an observation of their training facilities and the induction training course conducted at that time. The visit successfully obtained valuable insights and good practices from RMCD. This additional

information will significantly enhance the content in the Training Management Compendium in A/P region.

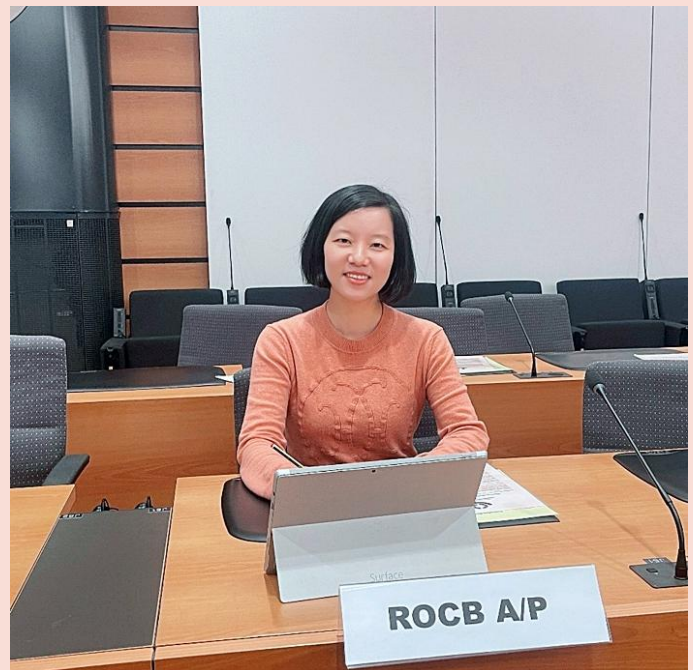
ROCB A/P took this opportunity to visit the RMCD headquarters in Putrajaya to conduct interviews regarding their response to the WCO Annual Needs Survey for the A/P region. The interviews enabled ROCB A/P to gain a deeper understanding of their situations and allowed us to seek clarification on specific needs they had expressed to convey to the WCO.

We extend our sincere appreciation to RMCD and look forward to continued collaboration in enhancing Training Management across the region.

Enhancing Global Customs Enforcement: Insights from the 45th WCO Enforcement Committee Session

24th – 28th March 2025, Brussels, Belgium

The 45th session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Enforcement Committee (EC), held from March 24th to 28th, 2025, brought together Customs administrations, WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs), and key enforcement stakeholders to discuss critical compliance and enforcement challenges. ROCB A/P remains dedicated to supporting its regional members in enhancing



their enforcement capabilities through knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives. This session provided valuable insights into emerging threats and strategies to strengthen enforcement efforts.

A major thematic focus of this year's session was "Customs Canine Units: Delivering Enforcement in an Era of Technological Change." Delegates were treated to a live demonstration by the Belgian Customs Canine Unit, showcasing the effectiveness of canine teams in detecting illicit goods concealed in luggage or carried by passengers. Additionally, discussions covered the proposed Accreditation Standard for WCO Regional Dog Training Centres (RDTCs), which aims to

integrate expert evaluations into the accreditation process. The final endorsement of this standard is expected from the WCO Council in 2026. Our office will actively follow up on this initiative and ensure that the latest developments are shared with Asia-Pacific members and will facilitate their preparation and alignment with the new standard.

Throughout the five-day meeting, delegates engaged in six panel discussions, covering the following enforcement priorities: Challenges and prospects for Customs canine units; Operational insights into combating environmental crime; Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats in the 21st century; Risks posed by illicit trade across e-commerce platforms; Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the risk management domain and Challenges and best practices for tackling trade-based money laundering.

A key outcome of the session was the endorsement of six new enforcement tools designed to enhance Customs' ability to combat illicit trade. These include WCO Standards for Dog Training Centres, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for controlling shipments under the Montreal Protocol, Updated WCO Customs Risk Management Compendium, Guidelines on Customs Responses to Industry Referrals, Customs Targeting Centre (CTC) Guidelines and "Fraud Detected through Post-Clearance Audit (PCA) and its Techniques" tool.

In addition to enforcement strategies, the session highlighted the role of technology in combating illicit trade. Discussions covered the deployment of the WCO GEOPORTAL tool for monitoring drug trafficking via general aviation, improvements to the CENcomm tool, and ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of data within the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN). Delegates also reviewed progress on the forthcoming Illicit Trade Report 2024.

The outcomes of the 45th EC session will continue to support Customs administrations in the Asia-Pacific region in strengthening their enforcement capabilities. By leveraging WCO expertise, enhancing regional cooperation, and adopting advanced technologies, ROCB A/P remains committed to equipping Member administrations with the necessary tools to combat illicit trade and transnational crime effectively.

WCO Organizes Regional Workshop on Data Analytics in the Asia/Pacific Region

24th – 28th March 2025, Bangkok, Thailand



The WCO Regional Workshop on Data Analytics, coordinated by the Regional Office for Capacity Building in the Asia/Pacific region (ROCB A/P), hosted by the Thai Customs Department, was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 24th to 28th March 2025. The event was held at the Thai Customs Academy and funded by the Customs Cooperation Fund of Korea (CCF/Korea).

The workshop brought together 19 participants from Customs administrations representing 18 countries across the Asia/Pacific region. From ROCB A/P, Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of Office, Mr. Mark Ho and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, Program Managers, and Ms. Aksara Mackhawiman, Assistant Program Manager, participated in the workshop. Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager, and Ms. Kanyawarat Sitthikunpanit, Program Coordinator, facilitated the event.

The workshop was structured into two main components: thematic sessions and hands-on sessions. The thematic sessions provided participants with insights into key topics such as the “WCO BACUDA Project,” “BACUDA Algorithms” (including DATE, AI-HS, CTGAN, and Image Data Analysis), “Data Ethics,” Member Use-Cases from Thai Customs, Korea Customs, and Cambodia Customs, as well as the “WCO Capacity Building Framework on Data Analytics.”

In the hands-on sessions, participants engaged in interactive exercises on subjects including “Data Quality Management,” “AI-HS Algorithm Modeling,” “Lite DATE Algorithm Modeling,” and “Drafting a Strategy & Roadmap on Data Analytics.” These sessions encouraged active participation and practical application of the concepts discussed.

As part of the program, participants also took part in a study visit to the Bangkok Customs Office, which included an observation of the Bangkok Seaport and the Containers Inspection Area, offering a practical perspective on Thai Customs’ operations.



Staff Updates

Farewell message from Mr. Louis Chan



Dear colleagues and friends,

As my secondment to the ROCB A/P office comes to an end, I find myself reflecting on these past two years with immense gratitude. Being part of the ROCB A/P family has been an extraordinary experience, both personally and professionally.

When I first arrived, I was filled with anticipation and excitement about the opportunities and the challenges ahead. Over these two years, I have had the privilege of working with some of the most talented, dedicated, and inspiring individuals, and together we have overcome challenges, accomplished missions, and built memories that I will always treasure.

Part of the journey is the end, and while it is bitter to say goodbye, I am grateful for the lessons I have learned, and the friendships built along the way. My time here has deepened my understanding of regional cooperation and the importance of fostering partnerships. It has been

a great honor to contribute to the important work of ROCB A/P, and I am humbled to have been part of this mission to support and advance the goal of WCO across the AP region.

As I'm getting prepared to return to Hong Kong, I carry with me invaluable lessons, cherished friendships, and countless memories. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my ROCB colleagues for their unwavering support and caring. Your kindness and friendship have made this journey truly special.

Though my tenure here is ending, I hope our paths will cross again in the future. I look forward to witnessing the continued growth and success of ROCB A/P and all the team members. Until then, please do not hesitate to reach out if I can ever be of any assistance.

Wishing you all the very best in your future endeavours.

Welcome message from Mr. Mark HO



Greetings,

I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to you all as I step into my new role at the ROCB A/P. My name is Mark Ho, and I come from the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department. It is a privilege to join this dynamic team and connect with such a dedicated group of professionals across the region.

I hold a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree from The University of Hong Kong. In 2013, I began my customs career as a Customs Inspector with Hong Kong Customs. Over the past 11 years, I've had the opportunity to engage in a wide range of customs duties—from air cargo selection and examination to excise compliance, bonded warehouse audits, and passenger processing at land borders.

In recent years, I led a cargo examination unit at the Airport Command, where I oversaw cargo clearance operations, refined examination techniques, and managed case investigations. I also directed the cargo selectivity unit, leveraging risk analysis and intelligence to target high-risk consignments. These experiences have sharpened my strategic and operational skills.

Taking on the role of Programme Manager at ROCB A/P feels like a natural yet exciting progression. I am eager to bring my insights in cargo management, compliance, and trade facilitation to support the WCO's goals and strengthen capacity building across our region. I look forward to partnering with each of you, sharing knowledge, and contributing to our collective success.

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P)

Address: 1, Thai Customs Department, G Floor of 120 Years Building,

Sunthornkosa Rd., Khlongtoey, Bangkok 10110 Thailand

Telephone: +66-2-667-6777

E-mail: rocb@rocbap.org

website: <http://www.rocb-ap.org>

Mr. Jun TAJIMA, Head, WCO ROCB A/P

Ms. Asuka NAGAMATSU

Ms. Grace YE

Mr. Jaemin CHO

Mr. Mark HO

Ms. Aksara MACKHAWIMAN

Ms. Jate-Arpa BENJAPHONG

Ms. Vareemon CHAIRUNGSRILERT

Ms. Kanyawarat SITTHIKUNPANIT

Regular Supporters: Mr. Tim WILLIAMS and Mr. Michael CYMBALISTA