

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL¹
ON THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DATA QUALITY
(June 2015)**

THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL,

ACKNOWLEDGING that data quality related concerns have been a shared issue for Customs administrations and the trade community for some time;

CONSIDERING that, among other things, data quality is critical to the security of the supply chain enabling the facilitation of legitimate trade,

CONSIDERING that quality data is key to the realisation of the potential trade facilitation benefits of the SAFE Framework of Standards.

CONSIDERING that Customs risk management strategies are reliant on adequate and accurate quality data to enable Customs Administrations and the trade community to make better informed cargo processing decisions;

HAVING REGARD to Standards 3.11 and 3.12 and Chapter 7 of the General Annex to the Revised Kyoto Convention² with regard to the data standards and the application of Information Technology,

RECOGNIZING that Customs administrations should request the right data, at the right time, from the right source in order to conduct effective risk assessment and to facilitate legitimate trade,

RECOGNIZING that it is also important to distinguish between two aspects of quality data: the relevance of data for its intended use and its reliability. Data quality may be adversely affected when information requested and received by authorities is not appropriate for the purpose of the request, and, data quality may be affected by the consistency, integrity, reliability, and completeness of information provided by the trade community,

RECOGNIZING that it is critical that data quality processes and procedures between Customs administrations and the trade community are developed, deployed, reviewed and refined through close collaboration in order to optimise the availability and value of the data required to meet respective objectives,

AIMING to improve the availability and quality of data that Customs administrations receive from the trade community to perform tasks attributed to it by governments,

¹ Customs Co-operation Council is the official name of the World Customs Organization (WCO).

² International Convention on Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (as amended).

DESIRING to facilitate legitimate Trade without compromising the effectiveness of Customs control,

RECOMMENDS that Members of the Council and all members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies, and Customs or Economic Unions should apply the following principles to enhance data quality:

1. **Principle I - Partnership** between Customs administrations and the trade community is critical to establish understanding of each other's' respective data quality requirements, identifying new processes and to improve upon those already in existence. In a constructive environment, this understanding can ensure that the right data of the right quality is delivered at the right time.
2. **Principle II – Analysis** of data, systems and procedures should occur on a regular basis to identify any areas of concern related to data and its quality. Data quality is also dependent on systems being properly configured to accept data in the most efficient way from the sources of the data in the normal course of their business, whilst fully respecting applicable data privacy and data confidentiality laws and regulations as well as an appreciation of the roles and functioning of different supply chain parties who provide that data.
3. **Principle III – Coordination** within the global Customs community through the WCO to: implement and maintain systems that recognize and apply global messaging standards; reduce manual and paper processes and procedures and promote electronic messaging; encourage to implement and updating of a non-exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable goods descriptions; identify originators of data in the global supply chain and facilitate their ability to provide data directly to Customs administrations; and, encourage the use of coded information based on international standards, including the tools and instruments of the WCO, whenever possible
4. **Principle IV – Education** of all relevant stakeholders in the international trade supply chain on data quality principles and improvements based on identified weaknesses in a systematic manner. Such education and awareness should not only take into account national and international Customs interests but should give due consideration to those raised by the trade community.

REQUESTS Members of the Council and members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies, and Customs or Economic Unions which accept this Recommendation to notify the Secretary General of the Council of the date from which they will apply the Recommendation and of the conditions of its application. The Secretary General will transmit this information to the Customs administrations of all Members of the Council. He will also

transmit it to the Customs administrations of the members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies and to Customs or Economic Unions which have accepted this Recommendation.

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