1. INTRODUCTION

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is an independent intergovernmental body, established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs services across the globe. The WCO represents 184 Customs administrations that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters.

As a forum for dialogue and exchange of experiences between national Customs delegates, the WCO offers its Members a range of Conventions and other international instruments, as well as technical assistance and training services provided either directly by the Secretariat, or with its participation. The Secretariat also actively supports its Members in their endeavours to modernize and build capacity within their national Customs administrations.

2. OVERVIEW

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), approved in 2012 by the African Union’s (AU) 18th Ordinary Session of Assembly of Heads of State and Government, is one of the Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063. The Action Plan for Boosting intra-African trade focuses mainly on accelerating intra-African trade and boosting Africa’s trading position in the global market, in
particular through the implementation of trade facilitation standards and tools. The AfCFTA entered into force on 30 May 2019 and the Operational Instruments governing trade under the AfCFTA regime were launched in Niamey, Niger in July 2019. Trading under the AfCFTA commenced on the 1st of January 2021.

Annex 2 of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade is dedicated to Rules of Origin (RoO) that should be implemented by all Members of the AU. The EU-WCO RoO Africa Programme (hereinafter referred to as the “Programme”) is a 48 months initiative funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the WCO to support the African continent to improve its capacity to deal with RoO and ultimately to support the harmonized and coordinated implementation and application of the RoO under Annex 2 of the AfCFTA.

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Programme is a concrete step taken by the EU and the WCO in consultation with key stakeholders to support African partners in the implementation of the AfCFTA. The main beneficiaries of the programme will be: 1) at continental level, the AfCFTA Secretariat and the African-Union Commission (AUC); 2) at regional level, the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), 3) at the national level, the African Customs Administrations (CA) and other Government Administrations (OGA), where relevant, and 4) the Private Sector stakeholders involved in origin matters. The main activities of the programme will be:

- Organizational diagnostics, gaps and needs assessments, analysis and review of national policies, and processes;
- Mapping exercises and case studies including on EU Economic Partnership Agreements;
- Assistance in developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), guidelines, etc.;
- Capacity building;
- Support to the development of information and awareness-raising campaigns;
- Thematic seminars, workshops, training and information exchange sessions;
- Study visits;
- Evaluation of national, regional and continental institutional structures, policies, procedures;
- Development of methodologies on Data sharing methods and tools;
- Train the trainer programmes;
- Support to implement RoO-related flagship initiatives (E-certification, self-certification); and
- Dedicated facility for demand-driven technical assistance

The programme will also contribute, in coordination with the WCO Origin Sub-Directorate, to further develop RoO-related e-learning, IT-tools and publications.
A full time Programme Management Team consisting of a Head of Programme (HoP), a RoO Lead Expert (OLE), a RoO Expert (OE), a Programme Officer (PO) and a Programme Assistant (PA) will be established at the WCO Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium.

4. **OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the Programme is to contribute to facilitating and increasing intra-African trade, trade between Africa and Europe, and between Africa and the rest of the world. Specifically, it aims to assist beneficiaries to implement and apply the RoO in compliance with Annex 2 of the AfCFTA, and with international commitments and best practices.

5. **MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES**

Under the supervision of the Head of Programme (HoP), the RoO Lead Expert (OLE) will provide the Origin expertise and be responsible for the content of the Programme. He/She will draft the terms of reference and reports for each of the Programme activities, mobilize, brief and debrief the experts delivering the Programme activities and ensure the quality of the expert’s reports. The OLE will also be involved and lead the planning and delivery of assistance missions and deliver substance for periodic and annual reports. He/She will provide technical insight to the HoP to align strategic priorities with technical relevance. In particular, the OLE will focus on the following key activities:

i. **Programme Implementation and Coordination:**
   (a) Contributing to the establishment of the work-plans and strategic orientations of the Programme;
   (b) Conducting diagnostic and scoping missions and giving input to the planning of Programme activities, including schedule and necessary resources to achieve Programme goals;
   (c) Drafting terms of reference for each of the Programme’s activities, liaising closely with beneficiaries to define the technical inputs necessary;
   (d) Mobilizing expert resources to achieve Programme goals;
   (e) Together with experts, conducting missions to Africa to deliver technical assistance and capacity building in line with Programme objectives;
   (f) Working closely with the OE and ensuring that the latter’s contributions are aligned with the Programme’s quality, standards and objectives.

ii. **Communication and stakeholders coordination:**
   (a) Supporting with provision of content for necessary Programme reports and both internal and external communications;
   (b) Establishing and maintaining a network of contacts in beneficiary institutions and within the Origin specialist community to support implementation activities;
   (c) Maintaining close contact with Secretariat staff and others responsible for WCO Origin instruments and tools to track updates, provide feedback from implementing administrations and contribute in the enrichment process;
(d) Coordinating and building partnerships with relevant international organizations namely the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and promoting the WCO and the Programme in relevant fora;
(e) Maintaining solid relationships with focal points at the AfCFTA Secretariat and from beneficiary administrations and organizations; and
(f) Coordinating with Academia and relevant stakeholders to ensure quality of publications and tools produced.

iii. Knowledge Management
(a) Ensuring the Programme’s outputs contribute to WCO Origin priorities and to enhancing the international RoO standards and tools;
(b) Providing technical expertise and supporting WCO relevant Origin working bodies and processes;
(c) Providing technical advice and expertise to the AfCFTA Secretariat; and
(d) Ensuring the Programme deliverables reflects the Programme’s objectives.

iv. Any other Programme-related duties as may be assigned by the Head of Programme.

6. EDUCATION

- Bachelor’s level degree or equivalent is required;
- Master’s degree or Bachelor’s degree and equivalent relevant combined work and training experience is considered an asset.

7. EXPERIENCE

- At least ten (10) years’ demonstrated experience in managing legal, organizational and technical aspects of the RoO at the Customs’ level;
- Experience in RoO negotiation under trade agreements;
- Experience in participating in WCO RoO working bodies as well as International bodies and African continental and regional bodies dealing with RoO;
- International exposure in the field of capacity building and technical assistance in Africa;
- Good understanding of the principles of sustainable development and capacity building;
- Demonstrated experience in providing strategic and technical advice to Governments, customs administrations and stakeholders;
- Experience in drafting Terms of references and reports for capacity building activities.

8. LANGUAGES

- Fluency in both English and French is mandatory for this position.

9. COMPETENCIES

- Good knowledge on WCO Revenue package;
• Good knowledge of principles of Advance Ruling Systems in the meaning of WTO Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and WCO recommendation;
• Demonstrated knowledge and expertise in relation to the RoO WCO and WTO working bodies and tools;
• Good reporting and planning skills;
• Strong interpersonal skills, writing and communication skills and team-orientation;
• Accreditation as a WCO technical or operational advisor is desirable;

10. CONTRACT AND CONDITIONS

• Staff member under short-term contract of two (2) years with possibility of renewal;
• Probationary period: six (6) months;
• Full-time employment (37 hours and 40 minutes weekly) at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium;
• 30 days of annual paid leave;
• Frequent travel to beneficiary countries;
• Salary commensurate to experience and up to 7,065 EUR/month all-inclusive (remuneration exempted from income tax in Belgium); and
• Compulsory WCO health insurance deducted from the salary (around 67 EUR/month).

This position is subject to the Manual for Short-Term Contractors. The successful applicant shall not acquire the right subsequently to occupy a permanent post within the WCO. The successful applicant will not be affiliated to any retirement fund or pension scheme taken by the WCO.

11. APPLICATION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate how he/she meets each of the essential qualifications and requirements. Applicants are encouraged to detail concrete achievements in their CVs and/or in their cover letters as well as include two references.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for an assessment which may include a written test and/or an interview. All short-listed candidates may be requested to provide copies of their original diploma, certificates and proof of relevant experience. Pre-selected candidates may also be subject to reference checks to confirm the information provided in the application.

Interested candidates should submit their application for review no later than 28 February, including a CV and cover letter in English or French by e-mail to:

badr.mouhcine@wcoomd.org

www.wcoomd.org
Interested candidates may submit a request for additional information via e-mail, providing full name and contact details. The evaluation of applicants will be conducted on the basis of the information submitted in the application according to criteria of the position and the WCO applicable rules.

12. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The WCO values commitment to the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability as well as values diversity among its staff members. Applications from qualified women and men will receive equal treatment and due regard will be paid to the importance of recruiting nationals from WCO Members on as wide a geographical basis as possible. Please note that the WCO Headquarters is a non-smoking environment.