Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate

EXPLORATORY STUDY ON
A POSSIBLE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE HS

Project Officers (two positions)

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

This Study Programme is examining the use of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, generally referred to as "the Harmonized System" or the HS.

The goal of the programme is to provide WCO Members with a report on the Harmonized System's current health and future sustainability, and, from wide consultation with stakeholders and the study of the system, an initial assessment of feasible strategies and options to ensure its long-term viability. This information will allow Members to make an informed decision on whether they wish to undertake a strategic review. In addition, it is expected that the Study will be also be a source of potentially
actionable input for the Harmonized System Committee (HSC), the body in charge of the HS, within their on-going work, independent of the decision on a possible future review.

3. **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

This Programme is an exploratory study of the ways in which Harmonized System (HS) is being used. The study seeks to analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of: how it meets current needs; how it is positioned to meet foreseeable future needs; and if there are identifiable areas in which its functioning could be improved. Where improvements would be beneficial, it also will undertake consideration of the prima facie feasibility of any methods or possible strategies (proposed during consultation or arising from the analysis) that might be tabled for future Member discussions.

The main activities include broad consultation with stakeholders, including Members, intergovernmental organisations, and the wider trade community, on the HS and the resulting collection of input; including; exploratory study of the HS and its supporting tools; ongoing consultation and communication with the controlling body for the HS, the Harmonized System Committee (HSC), and its Review Sub-Committee (RSC) and the Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC); cataloguing of proposals received; initial assessment of input and proposals for viability and compatibility with the intent and function of the HS; where appropriate, initial costing and impact studies of selected proposals to provide further information on the possible viability of proposals of high potential interest; preparation of reports to the relevant bodies, including the HSC, the Finance Committee, the Policy Commission, and the Council.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the assignment is:

- to provide Members with a report on the Harmonized System’s (HS) current health and future sustainability, and an assessment of feasible strategies and options available to ensure its long-term viability.

Required outputs of the review include:

- the preparation of discussion documents and progress statements for use in the on-going consultation;
- a catalogue of proposals collected;
- periodic reports to the HSC, including listings of proposals received that the HSC may wish to incorporate into the current review cycle of the HS;
- the production of the intermediate reports of the study as per the schedule outlined in the associated business case; and
- the final study report providing the findings of the consultation and study of the HS and assessments of articulated options for strategic changes to the HS for consideration by Members.
4. **MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES**

Under the supervision of the Deputy Director Tariff and Trade Affairs, the project officers will focus on the following key activities:

i. **Programme Implementation and Coordination:**
   (a) In consultation with management, develop and maintain the work plan, including updating and refining as appropriate; and
   (b) Monitoring of progress against the agreed work plan

ii. **Consultation**
   (a) Organisation and running of consultation fora, including on-line meetings, discussion platforms, mail boxes and focus groups; and
   (b) Recording and analysis of input received.

iii. **Study**
   (a) Examination of the HS and supporting tools, including usage rates, availability, barriers to use, update frequency, mechanisms to receive feedback and other factors relevant to the health and use of the instruments; and
   (b) Analysis of the study results;

iv. **Reporting**
   (a) Communicating results across a range of reporting avenues in a suitable manner for the relevant audience; and
   (b) Preparation of the formal reports;

v. **Any other Project/Programme-related duties as may be assigned by the supervisor.**

5. **EDUCATION**

- A degree, or demonstrated equivalent experience, that involved undertaking studies of systems would be highly advantageous;
- Accreditations or qualifications in one or more project management systems would be an advantage.

6. **EXPERIENCE**

- The WCO is seeking candidates with at least 10 years of experience in Customs (experience within other fields of work of demonstrable relevance to the conduct of the study may be considered in meeting some of this requirement).
- Demonstrated knowledge and expertise in relation to the HS Convention, Nomenclature and WCO HS tools and the existing update process of the HS and related tools.
- Demonstrated experience in consultative reviews of a complex system or programme, preferably at the international level; and
Demonstrable experience in producing reports on the analysis of systems.

7. **LANGUAGES**

- Fluency in English and/or French.
- In addition, knowledge of the second official language of the WCO (French and English) and/or other languages would be a strong asset.

8. **COMPETENCIES**

- Ability to organise and run communication forums;
- Ability to communicate effectively in an international environment;
- Ability to work within a small team with limited supervision;
- Knowledge of at least one project management system; and
- High-level abilities in writing analytical reports for wide readership.

9. **CONTRACT AND CONDITIONS**

The Programme will be delivered over the course of 24 months.

- Staff member under short-term contract of two (2) years;
- 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;
- Salary of 7,500 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.*

10. **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 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 June 6 2022, including a CV and cover letter in English or French by e-mail to:
Vacancy Notice

HSstudy.vacancy@wcoomd.org

Or by mail to:

World Customs Organization
Tariff and Trade Affairs
Rue du Marché, 30
B-1210 Brussels
Belgium

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.

11. 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.