



WCO-BAHAMAS TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CUSTOMS (2018/2019)

FLASH NEWS: SUCCESS STORY

AUGUST 2019

An **exceptional partnership**, between the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Bahamas Customs & Excise Department (BCED), is currently preparing the Bahamas' accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), expected at the end 2019. It takes the form of an intensive training combined with a national Mercator Programme Implementation.

This Programme is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and is aligned with the Trade Sector Support Program which has three focus areas:

Strengthening customs management	Modernization of customs operations	Enhancing the institutional trade platform (in the form of an Electronic Single Window).
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The BCED is thus the first WCO Member to take advantage of the Mercator Programme prior to accession to the WTO. Over the course of 18 months, 33 activities have been carried out in key customs areas, which were grouped into two components:

Component A: Organizational development

Linked with the RKC/TFA/WCO Mercator implementation, launch of an AEO programme and a national Single Window roll-out.

Component B: Human Resource Development

Through Leadership & Management Development, Integrity & HR, IPR enforcement, Review & Appeal framework and Training of Trainers on valuation/origin/classification, advance rulings.

In several areas, the WCO supported BCED in enhancing best practices such as:

- a Time Release Study to compare clearance performance before and after implementation of the Single Window (ESW).
- Drafting a Strategic Plan covering 5 years (2019-2024), a Programme to ensure sustainability of training over the next years, advance ruling forms and review & appeal provisions.

Project Duration:

March 2018 – October 2019

Overall Objective:

To provide technical assistance and capacity building (TACB) in a comprehensive organizational development and training programme

Purpose:

To assist BCED to align with the requirements of the WTO TFA, in preparation for Bahamas' accession

Partner Development:

BCED & IADB

Audience reached

(from programme inception to July 2019):

Total: 245

Men: 100

Women: 145



Launch of the WCO Training Programme

Launch of an AEO pilot programme

Two workshops were dedicated to a brand new national AEO programme in the Bahamas.

First, BCED participated actively in the WCO regional Train-the-Trainers workshop regarding AEO Validation for the Americas and Caribbean Region that was held on 27-30 May 2019 in Lima.

In parallel, the appointed Customs official of the Bahamas, assisted by the WCO, worked on AEO regulatory drafts, based on the WCO SAFE standards.

Secondly, a national AEO workshop took place on 24-27 June 2019. The AEO documentation was finalized in the course of the four-day meeting and presented to a blended audience of customs officials and trade representatives.

Following this workshop, BCED was to endorse and launch a pilot programme, once the first companies are selected to participate, and at the latest by the end of the WCO training programme (October 2019).



This training programme is an intensive and comprehensive one (with 33 weeks of activity over 90 working weeks).

It has already achieved outstanding results and additional ones are expected by October as a result of the Mercator programme Recommendations and WCO technical assistance.

A full report on the activities and outcomes is to be published by end of the year.

First workshop on IPR enforcement

New skillset to implement TRIPS / IPR in the Bahamas.

A national workshop was held on TRIPS/IPR, in Nassau from April 1st to 5th 2019. It first allowed BCED Officers to learn about the WCO standards and tools to combat intellectual property infringements and to gain awareness on how the fight against counterfeiting enhances results in combatting fraud and crime.



The workshop also touched upon topics such as risk analysis and techniques to identify pirated and counterfeit products.

Over the course of the workshop, an exercise was carried out at the BCED warehouses of the international airport, so that the theoretical elements of the workshop could be immediately put into practice. It resulted in the identification of several shipments containing counterfeit clothing, bags and shoes of different brands.

These controls demonstrated that customs officers' newly obtained skillsets could be efficiently used. Heightened inspection and more infringement cases are expected to take place in the Bahamas.

For further information, please consult the dedicated [WCO Webpage](#) or contact:

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and

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