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Launch of a 2-year extension of the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme

On the 29th June 2018, Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) signed a two-year extension of the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Trade Facilitation implementation programme. This programme is designed to support developing and least-developed countries to effectively implement the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA), using WCO’s international standards and tools under the auspices of the WCO Mercator programme, in close coordination with a separate funding envelope to deliver UNCTAD’s Empowerment Programme for National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs).

The two year extension of the programme was announced at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) summit in April 2018 by the Right Honourable Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, who emphasized the United Kingdom’s ongoing commitment to support customs administrations in developing countries to implement the TFA. The renewal added a further GBP 1.60 million to the Programme’s existing GBP 2.27 million, bringing the total value of the United Kingdom’s contribution to GBP 3.87 million. As part of the renewal, the Programme will geographically shift to members of the Commonwealth, which allows for new engagements in the African, Central American and Caribbean region, while providing a framework for continuation of Programme efforts in established Commonwealth beneficiaries.

Moving forward, the programme continues to be uniquely placed to deliver against the ambition of the TFA on the basis of tailor-made interventions, and peer-to-peer support from serving Customs officers to meet the specific requirements of individual countries. A pool of WCO accredited experts, including officials from HMRC and the UK Border Force, will be deployed on a regular basis to deliver technical assistance to support the Programme, while dedicated experts covering the most complex provisions of the TFA will provide a rich technical foundation and a basis for continuity in capacity building support. The WCO thanks HMRC for their continuous collaboration and looks forward to continue delivering support to its Members under the extended programme.

Integrity and Strategic Planning engagements with the Afghan Customs Authority

Integrating integrity into long-term Strategic Planning

Following the previous engagements supporting the Afghan Customs Department (ACD) in developing a new Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, the WCO delivered a joint workshop together with the US Commercial Law Development Programme (CLDP), to provide a strategic framework for Afghanistan to improve its overall management with the aim to increase integrity and efficiency. This workshop was a follow-up to earlier WCO-mediated efforts that resulted in the finalization of the new Strategic plan for the ACD. Given ACDs signature of the Revised Arusha Declaration in July 2017, the workshop also provided an opportunity to integrate integrity considerations in the strategic plan. Moreover, the workshop covered how to contextualize the Strategic plan within the framework of the TFA, given Afghanistan’s recent accession to the WTO, as well as how to efficiently adopt and implement a donor coordination strategy. In addition, a draft framework for an Integrity action plan was also developed, aligned with the new strategic plan, the Arusha declaration and taking into account TFA perspectives.
Palestine and Sudan Customs enhance their skills on how to use the national Customs Enforcement Network (nCEN)

Enabling intelligence-driven risk management and Customs-to-Customs cooperation

Following the Mercator Implementation Plans for Sudan and Palestine, a training on the nCEN was completed at the Regional Training Center (RTC) in Jordan. This training offered an opportunity for a small group of officials from Palestine, Sudan and also Jordan, to enhance their skills on how to effectively use the nCEN, which recently has been installed in both countries (Palestine and Sudan).

The training resulted in enhanced knowledge on the benefits and use of the global CEN and the possibilities it offers in terms of risk identification, analysis and profile application. Moreover, it allowed participants to gain an increased understanding of the scope of the nCEN project, the details of the regional CEN implementation plan and the necessary steps to be taken by all stakeholders.

Participants were exposed to a practical experience from Georgia which allowed them to improve their understanding of the benefits of nCEN in terms of improving regional cooperation and data sharing. The participants also increased their practical knowledge in using the newest version of the nCEN with enhanced features.

Malawian Revenue Authority strengthens its capacities in Single Window

Working jointly to harmonize and automate border procedures

Following the Mercator Implementation Plan for Malawi, endorsed by the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) in April 2017, the WCO jointly delivered with the World Bank, a workshop on national Single Window (NSW). The workshop provided an opportunity for participants, including representatives from Customs, other Government agencies and the private sector, to enhance their knowledge and skills on how to conceptualize, design and plan the national Single Window (NSW) project.

The workshop included practical examples of NSW implementation from other countries and provided an increased understanding of the NSW as an integrated part of efficient coordinated border management. In addition, the workshop served to collect feedback on the newly developed e-learning module on Single Window which has been developed under the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme.

As a result, participants were able to enhance their skills in practical NSW implementation, which will help the MRA in making strategic decisions related to NSW implementation and streamline border operations. Participants also concluded the workshop with the development of a Single Window roadmap for Malawi including proposals on forward WCO support to the MRA.

Based on the WCO Customs-to-Customs collaboration model, a delegation from the National Revenue Authority (NRA) of Sierra Leone, including the Director General of the NRA and the lead Mercator Programme Advisor for Sierra Leone, also joined the mission to learn from Malawi’s experiences.


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