WCO welcomes Zambia, Swaziland and Tonga as new Mercator beneficiary countries

In keeping with the new priorities of the extended HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme, focusing on developing countries in the Commonwealth, the WCO completed this quarter, three combined TFA Scoping- and programme planning missions in Zambia, Swaziland and Tonga. Recognizing the complexity of the trade facilitation environment and the unique Customs-to-Customs capacity-building model of the WCO, the scoping exercise completed in the three different countries, included extensive consultations with different units of the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), Swaziland Revenue Authority (SRA) and the Tongan Ministry of Revenue and Customs, as well as other key stakeholders including Ministries of Commerce, Industry and Trade and other cross-border agencies.

The exchanges aimed at identifying areas where the WCO could complement existing domestic and internationally-supported initiatives and add technical value through the effective application of WCO instruments and tools and the mobilization of the WCO’s extensive network of Customs-to-Customs expertise.

All three missions resulted in an identification of the current needs and challenges related to TFA implementation and recommendations on how WCO best can support the administrations with capacity building and technical assistance under the tailor-made track approach of the Mercator Programme.

Enhanced skills in Time Release Study, Coordinated Border Management, Single Window and Data Model in Zambia and Guyana

Demonstrating the potential of cooperation, consistency and predictability

Two in-depth planning missions to provide recommendations and propose forward support in the areas of Time-Release Study (TRS), Coordinated Border Management (CBM), Single Window and Data Model were delivered this quarter in Zambia (August 2018) and Guyana (September 2018). Through discussions with various stakeholders in both countries, including officials from different units of the Zambia Revenue Authority and Guyana Revenue Authority, officials from Ministries and other governmental agencies, international organizations and the private sector, current challenges and gaps were identified and concrete recommendations for forward support in the four above mentioned areas were concluded. In addition, field visits were organized to the border crossing Chirundu between Zambia and Zimbabwe and to the Port of Georgetown in Guyana, to closely observe the actual practices and come up with more detailed advice. The recommendations will be consolidated into a plan and activities delivered in collaboration with other international agencies to build on and complement existing initiatives.
Enhanced skills on the Advanced Ruling System and Tariff Classification in Malawi

Setting the foundations for long-term predictability for trade

Following the Mercator Implementation Plan established for Malawi, the WCO delivered a national workshop on the WCO Revenue Package and the Advance Ruling System for Classification for the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) on the 16 to 24 July 2018. The workshop provided an opportunity for 17 mid-to high level Customs officers of the MRA to enhance their knowledge on various WCO instruments and tools related to Tariff Classification and Advance Rulings. The workshop covered both theoretical and practical aspects of implementing the advance ruling programme for tariff classification and also presented examples of good practices in this area from other countries. As a result of the workshop, the MRA is now better equipped to deal with classification matters. The participants of the workshop also drafted an action plan to start the process of establishing an advance ruling system for classification within the MRA, which also included a proposal to revise the Customs Management Act to incorporate Advance Ruling.

Strengthened Valuation skills in Sierra Leone

Empowering Customs to take ownership and reduce burdensome Destination Inspection (DI) fees

In line with the Mercator Implementation Plan for Sierra Leone and following previous WCO-led support on Valuation, a Valuation diagnostic in 2016 and a Valuation Train-the-Trainees in 2017, the WCO delivered a follow-up mission to further enhance the National Revenue Authority’s (NRA) internal capacities to fully take over the responsibility for valuation controls. The mission included a 4-day Valuation workshop which provided an opportunity for a group of 15 Customs officials from the NRA to strengthen their technical and practical knowledge on Valuation, while using the skills of the 2017-trained accredited trainers who contributed as co-facilitators.

Given the complexity of the trade facilitation environment and the unique Customs-to-Customs capacity-building model of the WCO, this mission also included a meeting with the new Management of the NRA to discuss overall WCO support provided through the Mercator Programme. The mission team also met with other donor representatives based in Sierra Leone including the United Kingdom funded Department for International Development (DfiD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with the purpose of ensuring a coordinated and complementary approach to support the implementation of TFA in Sierra Leone.


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