HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD
CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

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Post Clearance Audit Diagnostic in Tonga

Enhanced skills on how to conduct PCA at the Ministry of Revenue in Tonga

Under the framework of the tailor made Mercator Programme support provided to the Kingdom of Tonga, the WCO delivered a PCA diagnostic in Nuku’alofa on the 20 to 27 of May. The objectives of this diagnostic were to assess the current infrastructure, skills and tools of the administration to identify the underlying causes for gaps preventing an effective implementation of PCA. The diagnostic included extensive consultations with different department and units within the Customs Division of the Ministry of Revenue of Tonga, including Risk Management, IT, PCA, the ASYCUDA team, among others. A special session was also organized for external stakeholders, including big importers and exporters in Tonga as well as Customs brokers, to introduce them to the WCO PCA concept. The consultations resulted in an identification of the current gaps. Moreover, practical recommendations were developed for forward capacity building support that will assist the Division of Customs of the Ministry of Revenue in Tonga to effectively implement PCA in line with Article 7.5 of the TFA and WCO Standards. These recommendations will also serve as a basis for future engagements in the Kingdom of Tonga.

“...The Customs Division of the Ministry of Revenue in Tonga has embarked on a reformation process to meet the standards of a modern 21st Century Customs. In my role as an MPA, I am very pleased for the opportunity to be part of this journey, in which I have witnessed a number of initiatives and changes being introduced within the administration. From a new legislation to its first multi-year strategic plan and operational vicinities with a full review of its processes, procedures, tools and resources. I have also been able to witness how the WCO’s assistance through the Mercator Programme’s tailor made track provides valuable perspectives in this process. My sincere appreciation to WCO and HMRC for the opportunity, and special thanks to the Customs Division in Tonga for making it work.” - Ms. Talaitupu Lia Taefu, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Customs and Revenue of Samoa and Mercator Programme Advisor

Strengthening Human Resource Management in Eswatini

Following the recommendations of the Mercator Implementation Plan for Eswatini from January 2019, a Human Resource Management development mission was delivered on the 29 of April to 3 of May 2019, hosted by the Eswatini Revenue Authority (ERA). The objectives of this mission were to enhance the internal capacities of the ERA to modernize its human resources management (HRM) practices by implementing a competency based HRM system. The mission also aimed at supporting the Human Resources Unit to transform its current mandate into playing the role of a strategic partner in driving the administrations reform and modernization agenda, which is key to succeed in effectively implementing the provisions of the TFA. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to get familiarized with the WCO Framework of Principles and Practices on Customs Professionalism and to increase their knowledge in competency based HRM as well as effective performance management. Participants were also able to define job profiles and develop a job catalogue.
Support on Advance Rulings for the Lesotho Revenue Authority

Enhanced internal capacities to develop an advance ruling system for classification and origin

The WCO delivered an Advanced Ruling workshop for the Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) in Maseru on the 10-14th of June. The objectives of this workshop were to enhance the internal capacities of the LRA to effectively carry out work on classification and origin, and also to develop an advance ruling system for classification and origin. The workshop came timely as the LRA currently is drafting a new Customs bill, which will include an entire section on advance ruling. Participants were provided an opportunity to get familiar with the theoretical and practical aspects of implementing an advanced ruling programme for tariff classification and origin, taking into consideration the current Customs modernization programme of the LRA. Participants were also introduced to good practices in the area of tariff classification and origin and provided assistance with their current update of the advance ruling legislation. As a result of the workshop a programme on Advance Ruling within the organizational structure was established, which can act as a center of knowledge on classification and rules of origin, in line with TFA Article 3.1. In addition, the participants developed an action plan for implementing an advanced ruling system at the LRA with specific timelines for the upcoming years.

First ever workshop on Small Island Economies (SIE) in the Caribbean

Enhanced skills in trade facilitation opportunities and challenges for small island economies in the Caribbean

Following WCOs strategic objective from 2018 to give more attention to Small Island Economies (SIE), the WCO delivered a Regional Training for 18 countries on Customs Modernization and Trade Facilitation in Port Louis, Trinidad and Tobago on the 13 to 17 of May. The objectives of this training were to assist the represented SIEs in addressing their unique challenges in Customs reform and modernization through accessing to, and implementing, key WCO instruments and tools. This training was a joint initiative jointly funded by the WCO Reserve Fund, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the HMRC programme. HMRC funded the participation for 4 countries as well as representatives from the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC). As a result of the training participants gained an increased understanding of international trade related issues as well as policy recommendations for the Caribbean. Through group exercises the participants were also able to study, discuss and provide recommendations related to Trade and Passenger Facilitation, Safety and Security, Revenue Collection and Risk Management. Participants also shared practical examples from their different countries. As a result of the workshop, several participants expressed their interest to participate in the WCO Virtual Working Group for SIEs to draft a future roadmap for the SIE initiative.


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