



## HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD WTO TFA Capacity Building Programme



### Mercator Programme A Navigational Map for Trade Facilitation

The **Mercator Programme**, launched by WCO in 2014 aims at supporting expeditious and harmonized implementation of the WTO Agreement for Trade Facilitation (TFA) using core WCO instruments and tools, such as the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC).

It offers tailor-made technical assistance and capacity building over longer periods and is designed to allow for effective coordination between the WCO, the WTO and other key international trade facilitation stakeholders.

The HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD programme, financially supported by the Government of the United Kingdom via Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), operates under the auspices of the Mercator Programme and assists developing countries in the implementation of the TFA.

### Main Programme achievements

October to December 2017

Continued progress in the implementation of the Mercator Plan for **Sierra Leone**, further refining the administration's valuation capacities in support of a phase-out of the destination inspection regime by 2019 (TFA article 10.5), supported by comprehensive organizational development support, including improved leadership, strategic planning and modern management competencies.

Continued implementation of the Mercator support in **Bangladesh**, providing important independent advice on international standards and best practices related to the efficient and cost-effective implementation of Single Window solutions (TFA article 10.4) in support of the country's major investments in this area, along with increased capacities to produce regular time-release studies with internal resources (TFA article 7.6) versus the continued use of external consultants.

Significant advancement of Mercator activities in **Ethiopia** resulting in the development of a mandate for the new dedicated advanced rulings unit (TFA article 3.1) within ERCA along with the first private sector applications to the scheme, supported by the addition of a corridor performance study (Djibouti Port to Addis Ababa) to the Programme's technical analysis package, covering matters of risk management, post-clearance audit and the conduct of time-release studies (TFA articles 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6).

**Donor collaboration:** In addition to the Programme's close working relationship with UNCTAD, the WCO continues to foster effective donor collaboration, focusing on the planning and delivery of joint engagements with the World Bank, the Global Alliance on Trade Facilitation, the Office of the Quartet (Palestine) and the United States Commercial Law Development Programme.



*'The HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD TFA Implementation programme continues to strive to build capacity in a number of countries to help reform a series of Customs measures as outlined in the TFA, to meet required international standards'. - Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)*

## Establishment of bonded warehouse in Palestine

The WCO organized a study tour for the Palestinian Customs Administration to visit the Customs Authorities in Morocco and learn from their experiences in establishing bonded warehouses.

This mission forms part of the tailor made Mercator support provided to Palestine by the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme aiming at supporting the implementation of trade facilitation measures in line with the WTO TFA. Establishing bonded warehouses, which is a new reform to be implemented in Palestine, will allow the Customs Administration to enhance their Risk Management procedures as well as strengthening their Coordinated Border Management capacities by bringing together all Governmental agencies involved in inspection procedures in one place, thereby fulfilling the requirements of WTO TFA article 7.5 and 8.

The study tour allowed participants to gain an increased and comprehensive understanding of how to set up bonded warehouses including the benefits, different types, related processes and the role of Customs in regulating and supervising.

*"Since the Palestinian Customs started to benefit from the generous assistance delivered by the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme under the tailor made Mercator approach, it has witnessed a real progress in the performance of Customs tasks by adopting international standards. Through technical and organizational support in the areas of Risk Management, PCA, Rules of Origin, Harmonized System, Strategic Planning, Leadership Management Development and Human Resource management, the Palestinian Customs Administration got the opportunity to build its capacities to better comply with the TFA requirements. We would especially like to highlight the important support in the establishment of the bonded warehouses in Palestine, by offering the opportunity for a small team to visit the Customs in Morocco and learn from their experiences in this field."*

**- General Directorate of Customs & Excises, VAT of Palestine**

*"Before embarking on a highly ambitious National Single Window Implementation project, the WCO workshop in Bangladesh brought together most of the agencies in the government and the private sector and enabled the participants from different sectors to understand each other's point of view as well as ICT capacity.*

*The participants gained an increased knowledge of Bangladesh's plans in establishing an interface-single window, expected to be launched in 2020.*

*The senior management appreciated the WCO's and HMRC's support in organizing the workshop and expressed an interest in continued technical support to enable effective implementation."*

### **Mohammad Ehteshamul HOQUE**

First Secretary, Customs  
Modernization and International  
Affairs, National Board of Revenue (NBR)

## Bangladesh National Single Window implementation

Following the Mercator plan for Bangladesh, the WCO delivered a workshop on National Single Window (NSW) implementation on the 2-5 October 2017, in partnership with the National Board of Revenue (NBR). The objectives of the workshop were to provide the cross-border regulatory agencies (CBRAs) concerned with import-export in Bangladesh with the WCO perspective and knowledge on the Single Window implementation, taking into account the experiences and best practices from other countries. The workshop also aimed at providing technical delivery and independent advice in relation to conceptualization, design and planning of NSW.

In his opening speech, Honorable State Minister for Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Planning Mr. M.A. Mannan emphasized the importance of the NSW in bringing together all regulatory agencies involved in import-export under single umbrella, benefiting traders and governments with reduced transaction costs and improved efficiency. The Chairman of the NBR welcomed the technical assistance provided by the WCO to support regulatory agencies in preparing for the NSW.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the around 25 participants, including both officials from the NBR and other government agencies, to discuss the cross border trade regulatory regime in Bangladesh and the related ongoing ICT initiatives. Participants were also

introduced to the various WCO instruments and tools related to trade facilitation offering guidance to government agencies and private trade partners in developing effective operational procedures in a harmonized manner.



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