



## 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

January to April 2018

The Programme continues to consolidate and follow-up on previous outputs, especially in supporting complex Post Clearance Audit (PCA), Risk Management and Time Release Study (TRS) engagements. As the current Programme draws to a close, accredited experts are evaluating outcomes and planning for new engagements in 2018-2019. Among the main achievements:

- **Ethiopia:** Enhanced skills in PCA (TFA Article 7.5) and TRS (TFA Article 7.6) following a corridor performance study (Djibouti Port to Addis Ababa), establishment of an Advanced Ruling Unit with a clear mandate (TFA Article 3.1) along with around 20 first private sector applications to the scheme.
- **Sierra Leone:** Enhanced skills and information sharing in risk management (TFA Article 7.4) and PCA (TFA Article 7.5), enhanced customs business relationship, increased valuation capacities in support of a phase-out of the destination inspection regime by 2019 (TFA article 10.5), improved leadership, strategic planning and modern management competencies.
- **Sudan:** Improved risk based-selectivity at five border stations (TFA Article 7.4), strengthened border agency collaboration in Khartoum and in Port Sudan (TFA Article 8), increased capacities in human resource management using a competency-based approach.

#### Launch of TFA E-learning material

In the beginning of this year, Arabic and Amharic translations of dedicated TFA e-learning modules on Risk Management, Post Clearance Audit, Coordinated Border Management and the Revised Kyoto Convention, were officially launched. In addition, the Programme has supported the development of a dedicated e-learning module on national Single Window implementation which is expected to be available on the CLiCK Platform in May 2018.



*'HMRC are pleased to see the continued progress towards TFA implementation under the programme. Working with beneficiary countries to develop tailor-made plans under the WCO's Mercator approach in conjunction with UNCTAD's Empowerment programme to help establish effective for NTFCs will help provide for in-country ownership of trade facilitation measures to improve domestic coordination and support timely implementation of the provisions of the TFA.'* - **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs**

## FOCUS: WCO supports Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) in strengthening their Project Management skills

Following the revised Mercator Implementation Plan for Zimbabwe, endorsed by ZIMRA in September 2017, the WCO delivered a workshop on Customs Project Management to support ZIMRA's capacities in training, human resources and project management in order to respond to the provisions and challenges related to the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA).

The training provided an opportunity for 18 officers to increase their knowledge of best practices and modern techniques in specific areas of Customs Project Management with the ultimate goal to support ZIMRA's effective implementation of international trade facilitation standards. The training was based on the newly updated WCO Project Management and Donor Coordination Compendiums.

Most of the officers who participated in the training will be managing reform and modernization projects linked to the Mercator Implementation Plan and will thereby get an opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills.



*Going into the mission, I was sceptical that we would meet the expectations of ZIMRA, noting that ZIMRA has already adopted a Project Management methodology. However, after conducting the organisational self-assessment, it was clear that this training could not have come at a better time. With the current reform and modernization agenda, ZIMRA needed to reflect on all the steps in Project Management within the organisation. The TFA-related project management training provided an opportunity to increase participants' knowledge, not only on project management concepts, but also on the specific requirements of the TFA.*

*Participants found the workshop very useful, several have developed career-interest and are now planning to be professionally certified in Project management, which will further contribute to enhancing project management capabilities within ZIMRA.*

*I look forward to working more with the dedicated Teams from ZIMRA on various projects identified in the Mercator Implementation Plan for Zimbabwe.*

**Alice Kolagano, Mercator Programme Advisor (MPA), Botswana Revenue Authority**

## FOCUS: WCO supports Afghanistan on Strategic Planning, AEO and enhanced Customs to Customs collaboration with Uganda

Following the previous engagements between the Afghan Customs Department (ACD) and the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), the WCO supported the participation of the ACD Director General, Mr. Reshad Popal in the 4<sup>th</sup> WCO Global AEO Conference held in Kampala, Uganda. Participating in the AEO Conference provided an opportunity for the ACD Director General to increase his awareness of the benefits of the AEO programme, in particular with regards to securing the supply chain and facilitate legitimate trade. Participating in this conference also allowed the ACD Director General to meet with a number of stakeholders, both from other Customs Administrations and the private sector, including the Director General of the URA, Mr. Dicksons C. Kateshumbwa and the Director General of the Nigeria Customs.

As part of the mission, the ACD Director General also engaged with the URA in a high-level consultation on Strategic Planning and visited the URA Central Document Clearance Centre, received a presentation on URA Risk Management methodology and visited the URA Automated Vehicle Tracking Centre. These areas were all selected as they are key features of the new ACD Strategic Plan. The discussions between both Administrations resulted in enhanced collaboration and an agreement to establish a MOU on bilateral exchange.

Following the Strategic planning mission in India (held in May 2017), the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme has continued to support the ACD in drafting their new strategic plan for 2018-2022. This plan was presented to H. E. Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan in April 2018 and is expected to be approved by the Afghan Cabinet in May 2018.



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