



Brussels, 19 January 2015.

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE

(Item IV on the Agenda)

I. Introduction

1. The WCO has contributed, through its tools and instruments as well as through capacity building and technical assistance, to increasing the economic competitiveness and growth of Members. In order to reach out to Members and with a view to developing additional tools and instruments in areas where Members seek guidance, the Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP) was adopted at the 119th/120th Sessions of the Council in June 2012.
2. The ECP comprises existing WCO tools and instruments which contribute to economic growth and aims at assessing any needs for additional tools. The principles laid down in the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) are recognized as the core of the ECP. The ECP also includes all other WCO tools that strengthen trade facilitation. In this respect, the ECP may provide practical implementation guidance for the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The Mercator Programme, the WCO's strategic initiative to support trade facilitation, also reinforces the ECP.
3. The first ECP Action Plan was endorsed at the Policy Commission's 68th Session in December 2012, with the objective of implementing and developing the Package. The ECP Action Plan requires the Secretariat to present a progress report to the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) on a regular basis. The ECP Action Plan aimed to develop, by the end of 2014, further instruments and tools which may contribute to the enhancement of economic competitiveness. Among the latest tools and instruments that were respectively developed by the end of 2014, were the following :
 - Transit Handbook
 - Model Business Lens Checklist for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
 - Compendium on Coordinated Border Management

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- Customs-Business Partnership Guidance (even of an “Advanced Pillar” to be developed by June 2015)

4. Awareness-raising was one of the most important parts of the first ECP Action Plan. In accordance with the Plan, attention has been drawn to the ECP and relevant tools and instruments at more than 90 meetings, and regional workshops on the ECP have been organized in all six WCO regions. Useful materials have been developed, including the ECP Toolkit, the WTO Trade Facilitation Toolkit and the RKC Toolkit. Based on the outcomes of the regional workshops, regional priorities and essential activities for economic competitiveness at regional level were reported to the Policy Commission meetings in June and December 2014. In addition, more than 50 national or regional capacity building activities on ECP or relevant tools have been delivered.

ECP Action Plan for Phase II and progress in implementation

5. At the PTC sessions in March 2014, Members agreed to revise the ECP Action Plan. In June 2014, the Policy Commission and Council took note of the proposal to revise the Action Plan and tasked the Secretariat to draft the revised Action Plan. At the last sessions of the PTC in October 2014, the ECP Action Plan for Phase II, covering the period from January 2015 to December 2016, was discussed. The ECP Action Plan was subsequently submitted to and endorsed by the Policy Commission in December 2014 (please see Annex hereto).

6. The Action Plan for Phase II requires the Secretariat to make regular reports on progress in implementation. However, considering the fact that Phase II only began in January 2015 there is no significant progress to report at this time. A progress report will be given at the upcoming sessions of the PTC.

Action required

7. The PTC is invited to take note of the ECP Action Plan for Phase II.

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ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE ACTION PLAN FOR PHASE II
(JANUARY 2015 TO DECEMBER 2016)

The Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP) was endorsed at the 119th/120th Sessions of the Council in 2012. With the objective of implementing and developing the Package, the ECP Action Plan was approved at the Policy Commission's 68th Session in December 2012. The Action Plan sets out 21 Actions, indicating deadlines where appropriate, and the bodies responsible for the specific Actions.

Based on the first ECP Action Plan, regional workshops on the ECP were organized in the WCO's six regions and many awareness-raising activities, including the development of useful materials, were conducted. The following tools and instruments were developed and formed part of the ECP by the end of 2014 :

- Compendium on Coordinated Border Management
- Transit Handbook
- Model Business Lens Checklist for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.
- Customs-Business Partnership Guidance (even of an "Advanced Pillar" to be developed by June 2015)

The ECP Action Plan for Phase II envisages concrete actions for the period from January 2015 to December 2016. It consists of 20 Actions, divided into :
(1) Awareness-raising, (2) Capacity building delivery, (3) Development and elaboration of the ECP, and (4) Regional integration.

1. AWARENESS-RAISING

The WCO has already developed a range of instruments and tools relevant to the growth of economic competitiveness, and the ECP lists these. The Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) is recognized as the core of the ECP and other WCO instruments and tools, such as the Time Release Study (TRS) Guide, the SAFE Framework of Standards, the Risk Management Compendium and the Single Window Compendium, provide WCO Members with guidelines for further trade facilitation. In this regard, raising the awareness of existing and newly developed WCO tools and activities contributes to enhancing the economic competitiveness of WCO Members.

	Action	Responsible body	Timeframe/Deadline
1	Use of meetings held in the regions to raise awareness and collect Members' needs	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
2	Organization of regional or national workshops/seminars	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
3	Publication of useful materials, including newsletters, for awareness-raising	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity

	Action	Responsible body	Timeframe/Deadline
4	Effective use of the WCO Web site to promote existing WCO tools	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
5	Promotion of the ECP through WCO's regional structures	Regional Offices of Capacity Building and other WCO regional offices	Continuous activity

2. CAPACITY BUILDING DELIVERY

The WCO has an active and professional capacity building portfolio. The WCO offers comprehensive tailor-made operational and technical support to implement ECP tools and instruments, based on WCO Members' needs. Coordination with donor institutions as well as networks of accredited experts in the areas of trade facilitation and economic competitiveness will be strengthened in the interests of effective capacity building and technical assistance.

	Action	Responsible body	Timeframe/Deadline
6	Capacity building to support implementation of the WCO's existing instruments and tools	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
7	Accreditation of more experts to enhance capacity building activities	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
8	Holding of regional donor coordination meetings	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
9	Organization of regional or national seminars and workshops to encourage more Members to accede to the RKC	WCO Secretariat and accredited experts	Continuous activity
10	Further development of e-learning modules, based on needs expressed by Members	WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity

3. DEVELOPMENT AND ELABORATION OF THE ECP

Bearing in mind the ever-changing trade and business environment, regular updates of existing WCO tools and instruments and further development of new tools are to be expected. In order to develop practical and useful instruments and tools for Members, innovative practices among Members will be collected and disseminated on a continuous basis.

	Action	Responsible body	Timeframe/Deadline
11	Collection and dissemination of innovative practices	Interested WCO Members, WCO Secretariat	Continuous activity
12	Development of new WCO instruments and tools for the ECP, based on the collection of innovative practices and gap	WCO Working Group on the TFA, Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) and other	December 2016

	Action	Responsible body	Timeframe/Deadline
	analysis	related WCO committees or working groups	
13	Refinement of existing WCO instruments and tools, based on needs expressed by Members	Relevant WCO committees or working groups	Continuous activity
14	Development and modification of the RKC Guidelines	RKC Management Committee	Continuous activity
15	Development of Globally Networked Customs (GNC) Utility Blocks	Interested WCO Members	Continuous activity
16	Development and modification of performance indicators	Relevant WCO committees or working groups	December 2016
17	Regular reporting to the PTC	WCO Secretariat	PTC sessions

4. REGIONAL INTEGRATION

A number of initiatives on trade facilitation and economic integration have been undertaken at regional and bilateral level. In response to this trend, high-level events on regional integration will be organized and Members' priorities on this topic will be monitored and researched.

	Action	Responsible body	Timeframe/Deadline
18	Monitoring of and research into regional integration priorities identified by Members	PTC and other related WCO committees or working groups	Continuous activity
19	Organization of a high-level conference on regional integration	WCO Secretariat	June 2015
20	Organization of regional workshops or seminars for effective transit regimes	WCO Secretariat	December 2016