



Editorial

In the last issue of the Newsletter, we told you about the latest developments with the WCO e-learning programme and emphasized our ongoing determination to meet the expectations of Customs administrations and economic operators.

As you will see in this issue, these two pillars of international trade have certainly understood the usefulness and originality of our training products, and the need to work together in order to achieve their common goal of making trade secure, straightforward and fast.

The Columbus Programme, recently launched by the new Capacity Building Directorate of which the WCO e-learning team is a part, is giving a new dimension to these aspirations by facilitating the sustainable development of Customs administrations. One prerequisite for sustainable development is a solid partnership between Customs and business, which must be built on a common foundation of technical knowledge which is accessible to all.

Through our training tools, we are pleased to be able to play our part in this ongoing effort to bring the worlds of Customs and business closer together.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue of the Newsletter.

SUMMARY

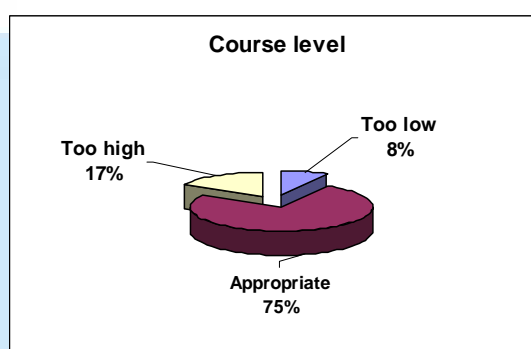
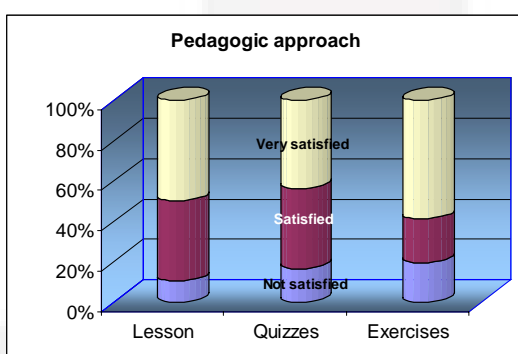
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Market research on e-learning : the results

As we announced in the last issue, the WCO has undertaken some market research in recent months, in a bid to gain a better understanding of what economic operators want in terms of training in the area of Customs tools.

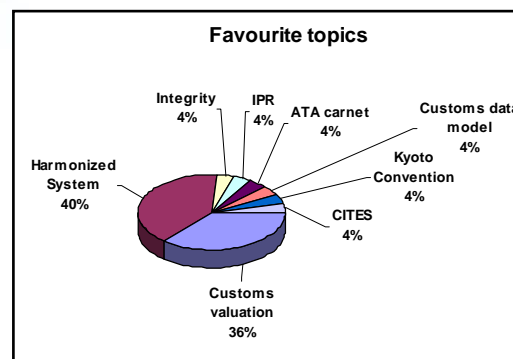
Almost 80 European company heads were contacted, and the results are very encouraging for our training programme.

It has emerged from the survey that a very large majority of the companies consulted are lacking training in Customs issues. The WCO e-learning programme, and the training courses organized at WCO headquarters, are capable of addressing the legitimate requirements of the private sector.



The e-learning tool was well received by the survey participants, who were able to try it out free of charge over a period of several weeks. The course level matches managers' expectations, and both the pedagogic approach and the ergonomics of the training modules met with warm approval.

Of the topics covered, the Harmonized System and Customs valuation proved the most sought after, although the other areas dealt with by the WCO e-learning programme are also of interest to certain companies. When it comes to topics which have not been addressed yet, there are continuing requests relating to rules of origin and these will be catered for soon (see box below).



A course on rules of origin

At its 24th Session, held in Brussels on 30 January 2006, the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin agreed to set up a group of international experts to assemble the material required for the production of an e-learning course on rules of origin.

This group is due to start work around June 2006, the aim being to complete the e-learning module early in 2007.

We would also like to reiterate our thanks to the companies which agreed to take part in the survey. With their help, we were able to prepare what proved to be a positive status report on our range of training products.

A new Members' area

The new "Members" area on the learning.wcoomd.org Web site has been up and running for several weeks. It offers a number of practical tools to Customs trainers.

- **The training kits** are comprehensive packages of WCO courses, which trainers can use to help them prepare effective training programmes. The kits include the course plan and time schedule, the teaching methods to be used, the course content and PowerPoint presentations. For the moment, the areas covered are risk assessment, Customs valuation, the Harmonized System, commercial fraud, CITES and Train the Trainers. Further additions to this catalogue will follow.
- **The e-learning registration form** can be used by national co-ordinators to send the WCO the list of officials who are to be enrolled on distance learning courses. This system will speed up the processing of requests and the issuing of passwords to administrations.



Another development is that tools for the Regional Training Centres have been made available. Also, the annual training needs survey form will soon be available on-line. Finally, e-learning programme users will be able to find all the user guides for the system.

The new pages are accessible under "Members tool" on the learning.wcoomd.org Web site. The password to be used is the same as for the platform, but access is restricted to tutors and trainers. If you have not been granted this status, you can submit a request via your national co-ordinator.

Access to the e-learning programme

The arrangements for individual access to the WCO e-learning programme are being made more flexible. It is now possible for people who do not belong to a Member administration to access 14 different training paths offering courses on Customs valuation, the Harmonized System and Temporary Admission.

Once a particular training path has been chosen, the individual will be given access to a certain number of hours of connection time, determined with reference to the training being delivered. The connection time can be used over a period of one year, beginning when the training path is opened.

Full details of this facility can be found on our learning.wcoomd.org Web site, under "Registration".

New features on the e-learning platform

Tools to help you...

Three new functions have been introduced to enhance the e-learning facility home page. They will help new users to get to grips with this new training opportunity, and may help the “old hands” to discover functions they have not explored yet.

- **Frequently Asked Questions** is a set of replies to the technical queries that many users may have. If you run into difficulties, you should find the solution here.
- **The tutorial** is an interactive demonstration of the various platform functionalities, and of the training modules accessible to you. You are strongly advised to consult the tutorial on your first visit, or if you would like to find out more about the facility.
- **The trainees guide** is a printable aid taking you through the various “rules” for using the facility to the full. It is crammed with practical tips which all trainees should find useful.



These innovations mean that from the e-learning facility home page, you are now just one click away from our entire range of technical advice.

...And a communication tool



In another new development, all users will now have access to a discussion facility via a link on the general platform menu.

Discussion forums on various topics have already been set up, in English and French. Co-ordinators and tutors who would like to launch discussions on other topics, or in other languages, are invited to get in touch with the WCO e-learning team.

We hope that this will become a special place for the exchange of ideas and experiences on Customs issues.

E-learning at the CEMAC Customs Academy

Since the beginning of its 2005 academic session, the Inter-States Custom Academy of CEMAC (the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa) has been offering its students access to the WCO e-learning programme, to complement their traditional training courses. The Director of the Academy, Mr. Basile Gabriel Ahoussa, kindly granted us an interview to share with us his experience of using this training tool.

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First, could you tell us a little about the Academy ?

The Inter-States Customs Academy is a specialized institution of CEMAC, which is the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa. It was established in Brazzaville on 22 December 1972.

The Academy is located in Bangui, which is the capital of the Central African Republic. Its objective is to provide vocational training for the Customs officers of CEMAC Member States. At the moment, the Academy is only providing training for junior officer, officer and inspector grades.

Why have you started using the WCO e-learning programme ?

To find out about it, and so as not to be out of step with what's happening in the world of Customs.

How does the programme fit in with the Academy's training policy?

The courses offered under the WCO e-learning programme act as a support for our classroom courses, in areas such as clearance procedures, Integrity, etc. E-learning also gives our students the opportunity to develop their IT and Internet skills.

What do the students think of it ?

I think I'll let one of our trainee officers, Mr. Ngomet Angoue, tell you in his own words.

"In this era of globalization, it is hard to describe how much we students in the 2005-2006 Academy intake have welcomed the inclusion of the e-learning programme in the Academy's training policy. This programme, which started out in the Academy at the same time as we did, has given us a real opportunity to break with our outdated study methods, through the use of a high-quality distance learning facility. How could we fail to appreciate this?"



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And how has this experiment worked out ?

Our assessment is positive. This programme enables students to learn more about the WCO, to add to, and build on the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom, and to familiarize themselves with new technologies.



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What are your future plans for e-learning in the Academy ?

We would like to encourage Customs managers in the CEMAC zone to register for the programme, as well as integrating e-learning even more fully in the programme followed by Academy students. Also, we will be presenting the programme at next year's International Customs Day celebrations.

Want to know more?

Visit our e-learning Web page on <http://learning.wcoomd.org>

Or contact us at the following address:

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Please feel free to pass this Newsletter on!

