1. **INTRODUCTION**

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is an independent intergovernmental body, established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs services across the globe. The WCO represents 185 Customs administrations that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters.

As a forum for dialogue and exchange of experiences between national Customs delegates, the WCO offers its Members a range of Conventions and other international instruments, as well as technical assistance and training services provided either directly by the Secretariat, or with its participation. The Secretariat also actively supports its Members in their endeavours to modernize and build capacity within their national Customs administrations.

2. **OVERVIEW**

Customs administrations perform a range of important functions on behalf of their governments including revenue collection, trade facilitation, protection of society, and national security. Customs authorities are key actors in international supply chains and make global supply chains of the future more efficient. Smart Customs have to minimize Customs clearance time and costs. In this sense, the use of disruptive technologies is a possible way how to achieve this goal.
The extent to which Customs leverage disruptive technologies to improve Customs processes can, as a result, have an important impact on cross-border trade processes and supply chain operations. The key understanding must be how Customs reacts not only to the use of technology by its stakeholders but also how it utilizes the emergence of new technologies which itself changes the manner of conducting business.

The WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies (June 2022) intends to raise further awareness and knowledge of the use of disruptive technologies in international trade and particularly in the border management environment, including the benefits and opportunities, and the challenges and gaps identified. It is an important source of information and a basis for policy actions that will ensure Customs’ contribution towards modernization. Technologies like blockchain, artificial intelligence, biometrics and others are being subjected to a rapid evolution therefore, there is a need for updated knowledge and information in order to support WCO Members to implement the latest technologies.

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2022, the WCO and its Members identified “Technology and Innovation” as one of the three focus areas of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025 to promote Customs digitalization and modernization. China Customs has been implementing the concept of “Smart Customs, Smart Borders and Smart Connectivity” to secure better and facilitate international trade. The WCO and China Customs recognize the importance of employing technology and innovative solutions in Customs’ response to global challenges.

As highlighted in the WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies (June 2022), the holistic use of technologies is extremely critical for the ‘Smart’ Customs of the future. Currently, Customs administrations are embracing technologies in a largely independent way, which is creating gaps in their level of technological development. If the gaps in technological advancement among Customs administrations are not addressed strategically and holistically, then the very vision of the global Customs community: “Borders divide, Customs connects” cannot be attained. Such gaps are also associated with disparities in technical know-how, capacity and availability of resources within the global Customs community.

To bridge these gaps and overcome challenges, Members should be supported to identify and develop pragmatic and inclusive solutions, first through up-to-date and holistic knowledge of technologies, research and knowledge on appropriation challenges, exchange of experience and capacity building.

4. OBJECTIVES

The Smart Customs Project aims to identify Members’ current status as well as needs, foster the application of technological and innovative solutions in Customs, reduce the digital gaps among Members and help them better understand the technologies available to them to tackle global challenges.

The project will focus on the following domains:
a. Updating the WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies (June 2022). This update could include the evolution of technologies already mentioned in the report, the inclusion of new emerging technologies in the report as well as inclusion of a few new chapters on some specific technologies that will be identified during the project;

b. Develop detailed information about the business processes, policy arrangements, legal requirements, minimum technical specifications (for the implementation/integration), costs, and trends associated with identified specific technologies;

c. Publishing a research paper on the challenges related to innovation and appropriation of technologies by Customs;

d. Launching a community portal to share and push knowledge on technologies and innovative solutions applied to Customs; and,

e. Conducting an analysis/survey of Members’ needs, in order to be able to provide them in the future with appropriate technical assistance and capacity building in this field.

5. MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Project Assistant should support the Project Manager in the activities defined in the Project. Under the supervision of the Project Manager, the Project Assistant will focus on the following key activities:

(a) Assist in developing and implementing project plans;

(b) Represent the Project in the absence of the Project Manager;

(c) Conduct background research to inform project planning;

(d) Contribute to drafting of project activity plans and monitoring of implementation, and draft quarterly reports;

(e) Draft articles on Project activities and achievements to be published on the WCO Web site, social media and others;

(f) Ensure that Project activities are correctly documented and tracked;

(g) Ensure that Project expenditures are adequately recorded and records are maintained;

(h) Manage the procurement of Project resources, such as conference facilities and equipment in accordance with established WCO procurement policies;

(i) Ensure that travel and accommodations for Project activities is arranged using WCO systems and procedures;

(j) Write briefing notes, texts for presentations/speeches, contribute to the work/reports of the Procedures and Facilitation Sub-Directorate, and;

(k) Any other Project-related duties as may be assigned by the supervisor.
6. **EDUCATION**

- Masters’ level qualification in international development, economics, political economy, technology science or a related field, or an equivalent combination of education, skills and experience;

7. **EXPERIENCE**

- Experience in working for funded projects in an international environment (at least four (4) years);
- Experience in providing administrative and logistical support to programmes/projects;
- Experience in organizing meetings, international events and workshops (virtual and in-person);
- Experience with drafting web articles, press releases, reports and using social media tools; and
- Experience in conducting background research, drafting activities’ plans and monitoring the implementation of the Project.

8. **LANGUAGES**

- Fluency in English and French, both written and spoken is required; and
- Knowledge of other language(s) would be an advantage.

9. **COMPETENCIES**

- Strong written and oral communication skills in English and French;
- Ability to work on a team in a multi-cultural environment;
- Ability to write technical reports, letters, and other documents;
- Knowledge of social network communication (LinkedIn, Facebook...) and of communication material design (leaflets, newsletters, logos...);
- Ability to use project management software and common software (In-depth knowledge of MS Office -Word, Excel and PowerPoint);
- Excellent organizational skills; and
- Knowledge or strong interest in new technologies.
10. CONTRACT AND CONDITIONS

- Staff member under short-term contract of two (2) years (with the possibility of renewal depending on availability of funding and work performance);
- Envisaged start of short-term contract: ideally by 12 February 2024;
- Probationary period: six (6) months;
- Full-time employment (37 hours and 40 minutes per week) at WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium;
- 30 days of paid annual leave;
- Travel to beneficiary countries required;
- Salary at 4500 EUR/month all-inclusive (remuneration exempt from income tax in Belgium); and
- Compulsory WCO health insurance deducted from salary (around 68 €/month).

This position is subject to the Manual for Short-Term Contractors. The successful applicant shall not acquire the right to subsequently occupy a permanent post within the WCO. The successful applicant will not be affiliated with any retirement fund or pension scheme taken by the WCO.

11. APPLICATION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate how he/she meets each of the essential qualifications and requirements. Applicants are encouraged to detail concrete achievements in their CVs and/or in their cover letters as well as include two references.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for an assessment which may include a written test and/or an interview. All short-listed candidates may be requested to provide copies of their original diploma, certificates, and proof of relevant experience. Pre-selected candidates may also be subject to reference checks to confirm the information provided in the application.

Interested candidates should submit their application for review no later than 19 December, including a CV and cover letter in English or French by e-mail to:

technology.project@wcoomd.org

The evaluation of applicants will be conducted on the basis of the information submitted in the application according to criteria of the position and the WCO applicable rules.

This job offer is subject to the signing of an agreement that will enable the creation of the position.

www.wcoomd.org
12. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The WCO values commitment to the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability as well as values diversity among its staff members. Applications from qualified women and men will receive equal treatment and due regard will be paid to the importance of recruiting nationals from WCO Members on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The age limit for employment with the WCO is 65. Please note that the WCO Headquarters is a non-smoking environment.