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 endeavors to modernize and build capacity within their national Customs administrations.

2. PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

Customs administrations perform a range of important functions on behalf of their governments, including revenue collection, trade facilitation, community protection, and national security. Their compliance with international standards and capacity to simplify and harmonize customs formalities are vital for the competitiveness of their national economy, the improvement of the investment climate and further development of international trade. Therefore, investing in Customs reform and modernization has become a key development priority in recent years.
The adoption of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), including its mandatory provisions related to the employment of modernized Customs procedures, has reinforced the need to support Customs administrations in developing and least developed countries to modernize and reform Customs in line with international standards.

The WCO is a so-called ‘Annex D organization’ and supports its Members in the implementation of the WTO TFA.

In April 2022 a Grant Agreement was signed between the WCO and His Majesty’s Revenue and Customs ("HMRC") of the United Kingdom for the period April 2022-March 2025. This Grant Agreement is designed to support the sustainable implementation of the WTO TFA in developing countries using WCO instruments and tools under the auspices of the WCO Mercator Programme, which is designed to provide tailor-made assistance for implementing trade facilitation measures. More information on the WCO Mercator Programme can be found here.

The “Accelerate Trade Facilitation Programme” (the “Programme”) brings together the WCO and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development ("UNCTAD") in a partnership sponsored by HMRC to support the effective implementation of the WTO TFA with the objective to contribute to sustainable inclusive economic growth.

The Programme is designed to leverage the competencies and capacities of the WCO, UNCTAD and HMRC. The WCO provides significant value for money by leveraging its unique Customs-to-Customs approach and its pool of WCO accredited and recognized experts, including officials from HMRC and the United Kingdom Border Force, to deliver technical assistance and capacity building and by applying the WCO’s international standards and tools under the auspices of the WCO Mercator Programme. UNCTAD’s complementary support to National Committees on Trade Facilitation is a key component of the Programme’s vision.

The Accelerate Trade Facilitation Programme is a follow-up to the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Trade Facilitation Capacity Building Programme, which has been running since 2015 and has entered its fourth phase. For more information about the Accelerate Trade Facilitation Programme and its work, please consult here.

3. **OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the Accelerate Trade Facilitation Programme is to foster sustainable development by supporting Customs administrations to implement the TFA, through providing both TFA technical assistance as well as capacity building on organizational development as a cross-cutting enabler required to ensure a conducive environment for successful reforms. This includes technical assistance in the areas of risk management, time release study and air cargo streamlining and organizational development capacity building on gender equality and diversity, integrity, leadership and management development, and competency-based Human Resource Management. This is done through the organization of national diagnostics or capacity building/technical
assistance training, workshops, and regional and international events, promoting experience sharing and building on a Customs-to-Customs partnership.

4. **MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES**

Reporting to the Head of the Programme, the Trade Facilitation Technical Specialist will provide technical expertise and will be responsible for the content of technical capacity building on selected subject trade facilitation measures to several beneficiary countries. Her/his functions will focus on the following key areas:

i. **Programme Implementation**

(a) Conducting in-country and/or remote diagnostic and scoping to plan the TFA capacity building activities in detail, including necessary inputs to achieve the Programme’s objectives and outputs – working in a comprehensive way towards outcome and impact level results in technical subject matter areas;

(b) Drafting project activity plans and monitoring implementation, in line with the Programme's capacity building approach that combines remote assistance with in-country training/assistance and validation/consolidation for sustainable results;

(c) Undertaking capacity building and technical assistance missions on a remote basis and in-country to the benefit of the Programme partner countries;

(d) Establishing and maintaining working relationships with other experts and specialists within and outside the WCO (most notably international partners such as UNCTAD and World Bank Group), and integrate their perspectives, where appropriate into the technical project planning deliberations;

(e) Coordinating with experts and partner countries to deliver Programme activities including the drafting of Terms of Reference or the Programme’s technical activities and drafting of mission agendas in close consultation with WCO subject lead officers, identified experts and partner countries, as well as preparatory meetings and briefings to ensure a results-oriented approach in line with Programme’s objectives;

(f) Providing ongoing remote support to beneficiary countries, including guidance, feedback and consultations, and delivering virtual capacity building and technical assistance on the technical measures;

(g) Ensuring, in consultation with the Head of the Programme, that senior management of beneficiary administration engaged for strategic buy-in for required project management resources for national ownership and effective reforms;

(h) Contributing to drafting activity reports with a key outlook to tangible results in line with the Programme’s Results Framework;

(i) Conducting background research to inform activities and project planning.
ii. Support to Experts

(a) Mobilizing experts from the WCO or its Expert Pool to deliver technical assistance and capacity building activities under the Programme, which may require logistical support at times;
(b) Quality assurance of technical support by, among others, ensuring (i) experts are well briefed on the technical aims of their activities and (ii) the intervention is aligned with the needs of the country, (iii) the experts are provided with the needed country background documents and have access to the relevant WCO tools and instruments and are utilizing them appropriately;
(c) Debriefing experts after each intervention and ensure the quality of their reports, while monitoring and/or determining follow-up with the experts and the partner country.

iii. Familiarization with and contributing to WCO Guides, and Related Training Materials

(a) Meeting with respective subject matter WCO lead officers to achieve a consensus on the content delivery as part of the specific activity;
(b) In collaboration with the designated WCO officials, contributing to the further development, review, and refinement of the specialized guides on trade facilitation, compliance and simplification of Customs procedures, pro-actively developing digital training materials and other related instruments as required – also noting that capacity building is taking place with a blended approach, combining remote with in-country consolidation and validations as needed.
(c) Contribute to technical papers and briefings for relevant WCO committees, including the Capacity Building Committee and the Permanent Technical Committee; and

iv. Communications

(a) Supporting the Head of the Programme and Team members with the provision of content for necessary Programme reports and both internal and external communications;
(b) Working effectively in a team with an agile mentality for the effective and timely delivery of Programme results and donor reporting with a wide-reaching strategic scope;
(c) Developing Case Stories to illustrate the success of the Programme in supporting partner countries in achieving increased alignment with various TFA Articles and establishing consequently an enhanced business environment;
(d) Establishing and maintaining a network of contacts in partner countries and within the trade facilitation specialist community to support implementation activities;
(e) Maintaining close contact with WCO-Secretariat staff responsible for trade facilitation instruments and tools to track updates and providing feedback from implementing administrations.
v. Other Programme related duties as may be assigned by the supervisor.

5. EDUCATION

- Masters’ level qualification or Bachelors’ level qualification, or an equivalent combination of education, skills and experience;
- Relevant technical training and/or credentials in one or more TFA measures, most notably credentials on Time Release Study (TFA Article 7.6), Coordinated Border Management (TFA Article 8), Risk Management (TFA Article 7.4) and/or Expedited Shipments (TFA Article 7.8) would be an asset.
- Being a WCO (pre-) accredited or internationally recognized technical expert in one or more TFA technical measures would be an asset.

6. EXPERIENCE

The WCO is seeking a Trade Facilitation Technical Specialist with at least 10 years of experience of direct exposure to border procedures within a modernized Customs context.

- Middle to senior-level active Customs officer or a recently (within the last five years) retired Customs officer. It will be considered an advantage if the candidate is an active official with the endorsement of their home administration to support the Programme;
- Demonstrated knowledge and technical expertise in relation to the WTO TFA Agreement and its implementation and a deep technical understanding in one or more technical trade facilitation measures, such as Time Release Study (TFA Article 7.6), Coordinated Border Management (TFA Article 8), Risk Management (TFA Article 7.4) and Expedited Shipments (TFA Article 7.8);
- Direct experience working on border procedures within a modernized Customs context;
- Exposure to an international/cross-cultural context;
- Practical experience in delivering (international) technical assistance, capacity building, training and learning, particularly related to TFA implementation in areas such as Time Release Study, Coordinated Border Management, TFA Article 7.8/Expedited Shipments;
- Experience in oversight, project management and/or implementation of Customs reforms, preferably in a Customs Administration that is a contracting party to the Revised Kyoto Convention, and/or in a regional or international organization;
- Operational Customs experience in a seaport, airport or land border crossing;
- Exposure to the work of other public and private border stakeholders, including Customs brokers, clearing agents, freight forwarders, shipping companies, phytosanitary / sanitary authorities, public health authorities, standards authorities, etc., in an operational border control context;
• International exposure and practical experience in the field of capacity building and technical assistance in developing countries, including Middle Income Countries, would be considered an asset.

It should be noted that the current Programme team already includes a technical specialist focusing on Post-Clearance Audit, Risk Management and Authorized Economic Operator, and the ideal candidate would bring complementary technical trade facilitation expertise and the competency to effectively render capacity building and technical assistance in the subject matters content.

7. LANGUAGES

• Excellent proficiency in drafting and speaking in English; and
• Knowledge of French would be an advantage.

8. COMPETENCIES

• Ability to facilitate discussions and collaboratively produce working documents, including on a remote basis;
• Ability to communicate effectively in writing, including writing and evaluating reports in proficient English;
• Ability to build trust-based advisory and capacity building relationships, preferably in a cross-cultural context;
• Ability to understand the learning needs of Customs officers at various levels and tailor technical assistance and capacity building approaches (both in-country and on a virtual basis) and content to this end;
• Knowledge and detailed understanding of modern risk-based Customs clearance regimes, including legal and operational requirements;
• Knowledge of computerized Customs management systems;
• Knowledge of the WTO TFA, the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention and related global Customs standards and procedures as well as facilitative measures, such as authorized operators, post-clearance audit and risk management;
• Knowledge of main Customs clearance procedures, including home use, transit, Customs warehousing, etc.;
• Leadership and a high level of integrity;
• Strong interpersonal skills, writing and communication skills and team-orientation.

The ideal Trade Facilitation Technical Specialist candidate is a team player that does not merely bring the competency to provide inspiring knowledge transfer and capacity building on technical trade facilitation measures, but also has the proven ability to identify opportunities and risks for
implementing effective Customs reforms related to the necessary organizational enabling environment.

9. **CONTRACT AND CONDITIONS**

- Staff member under a short-term contract until 31 March 2025. Extension may be considered subject to performance and donor confirmation of the Programme being extended with a Phase V.
- Expected starting date: as soon as possible. Probationary period of six (6) months.
- Full-time employment (37 hours and 40 minutes weekly) at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.
- 30 days of annual paid leave.
- Relocation package available (conditions apply)
- Frequent travel to partner countries is required.
- Salary to be negotiated based on experience and profile, starting from 6,000 EUR/month all-inclusive;
- The contract will be exempt from income tax in Belgium, however, it is the applicant’s responsibility to verify his / her tax obligations outside of this arrangement, and
- Compulsory WCO health insurance deducted from the salary (around 73 EUR/month).

This position is subject to the Manual for Short-Term Contractors. The successful applicant shall not acquire the right subsequently to occupy a permanent post within the WCO. The successful applicant will not be affiliated to any retirement fund or pension scheme taken by the WCO. If a candidate is related to current WCO staff members (spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister), he/she is required to expressly indicate this in the application.
10. APPLICATION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The onus is on the applicants to demonstrate how they meet each of the education, experience, and competency requirements. Applicants are encouraged to detail concrete achievements in their CVs and/or in their cover letters, as well as include references. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for an assessment which may include a written test and one or more interviews. All short-listed candidates may be requested to provide copies of their original diplomas, 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 17 January 2024 in English by e-mail to tfapartnerships@wcoomd.org. The application should consist of (i) a cover letter, (ii) a CV including achievements and references and (iii) a detailed 'track record' overview of their specific experience on technical trade facilitation measures and/or reforms noting the applicant’s specific role in the respective project(s) to establish their credentials thereon.

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

11. 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.