

WCO ESA Project

Financially supported by the Finnish Government

6th Steering Committee Meeting

Brussels, 25 June 2014

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Opening Session

The 6th Steering Committee (SC) Meeting was chaired by Mr. Bevan Simataa, Commissioner of Namibian Customs and Excise, who welcomed all SC participants. Ms. Heike Barczyk, WCO Deputy Director of Capacity Building, welcomed participants on behalf of the WCO.

2. Project Progress Report

Ms. Riitta Passi, WCO-ESA Project Manager, provided the SC with a summary of the Project Activity and Progress Report for the period 1.10.2013 – 24.6.2014, which had also been shared with participants in written form prior to the SC meeting. The SC highly appreciated the number of activities (15) carried out during the first 9 months of this 3rd year of the Project, and approved the Project Progress Report.

The SC endorsed the work done in relation to Gender Equality and showed its appreciation of the successful workshops on the Gender Equality Organizational Assessment tool (Ms. Barczyk provided information about this event, which had been held in Lesotho) and on Leadership and Management Development.

The SC welcomed the progress achieved in implementing the nCEN: 3 countries had finalized the implementation, while 13 more were in the process.

The SC took note of the various activities carried out in relation to CBM and SW: Top Management and National Policy dialogues, site visits, SW workshop and contracting a Single Window expert to assist the Mauritius Revenue Authority to finalize the implementation of SW. The Mauritius Revenue Authority agreed to share with SC members the ToR and further documents and experience on the development of the SW in Mauritius.

The SC welcomed the Project support in the area of Resource Mobilization (Ms. Barczyk shared information on the Resource Mobilization workshop held in Mombasa) and approved funding for a regional Donor Conference as a next step/follow-up activity.

The SC also took note of the increased number of countries participating in Project activities.

The SC again underlined the role of the ROCB in complementing the WCO's efforts to create a pool of experts, and welcomed the information on the accreditation of four experts by the WCO in the area of Single Window and LMD.

The SC welcomed the decision taken by Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the no-cost extension of the Project until the end of March 2016, and thanked the Ministry for this decision.

Namibia Component – Update by Finnish and Namibian Customs on progress

The SC took note of the revised Action Plan and the progress made with the Namibia Component, presented by Mr. Anssi Kartila, Head of Risk Management of Finnish Customs, and supplemented by the Chair of the SC in his capacity as Namibian participant in the meeting.

Project Financial Report 1.10.2013 – May 2014

The SC took note of an overview of the current financial situation of the Project in Year 3 as presented by Mr. Musta Esen, Project Fund Manager, WCO Secretariat.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The SC took note of an update by Ms. Barczyk on evaluation thoughts within the Project, and agreed on jointly defining evaluation methods related to the different sub-components of the Project. There was a common understanding that for any future project, should this become a reality, more emphasis would need to be placed on defining concrete baseline data right from the beginning of the Project.

In relation to Leadership and Management Development support, the SC agreed to provide final comments on the evaluation criteria developed by the WCO under the sponsorship of the World Bank - which will be shared separately.

On the subject of nCEN development and implementation, the SC again took note of the baseline data at the beginning of the Project: nCEN application not yet fully developed, only 1 country, namely Mauritius, involved in a pilot phase. The Project Manager and the WCO Secretariat volunteered to develop a questionnaire form to be used to better assess progress in Members, which will also be shared with the SC members for their comments.

With regard to CBM and SW support, Ms. Passi informed the Meeting about a questionnaire that had been developed and shared with participating Members at the recent SW workshop, and which could be used even further for evaluation purposes. The questionnaire will be shared with SC members separately, for their comments.

Referring to the gender equality perspectives of the Project, SC members recommended using the results of the assessments at the national level, after the regional Workshop on the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool, as indicators for progress.

It was also agreed that all those pieces of information could equally form the baseline data for any potential next project.

Comments by SC members on all questionnaires and approaches should be provided to the Project Manager and the WCO by 10 August 2014 at the latest.

Work Plan until the end of December 2015

The SC approved the Budget Plan until the end of the Project, with one reallocation of funds: as a follow-up activity to the Resource Mobilization Workshop held in May 2014, a regional Donor Conference will be funded. A total of EUR 30 000 will be allocated for this event, tentatively scheduled for October-November 2014. The SC also agreed that provided there is sufficient interest among Members, a potential reallocation of funds for a 2nd Single Window and Data Model Workshop for the remaining (up to 13 countries) that did not participate in the first Workshop would be further explored by the Project Manager and the Fund Manager. The SC also acknowledged the importance of the planned Integrity activities to be held in Swaziland and Angola.

Possible 2nd Phase of the Project

As also recommended by the mid-term Evaluation Team, the SC discussed the possible 2nd phase of the Project. Mr. Jan Koivu, from Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, informed the Meeting that such a 2nd phase or 2nd project has not yet been decided upon at all. Should there be such a possibility, it would be necessary to show that a possible 2nd phase would not simply be an extension of the present one, but that some new direction should and could be taken. The results of the present Project should, however, be reflected, and baseline data established.

The SC agreed to provide the WCO and the Project Manager with input on possible priorities for, and coverage of any 2nd phase/project by 30 September 2014 at the latest. The ROCB ESA also volunteered to reach out to Members during the regional meeting to be held the following day in the margins of the WCO Council sessions. The WCO volunteered to then develop a first Concept Note on the basis of the inputs received, which would be presented to Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs for further consideration.

Support for French-speaking countries

The SC took note of the concerns expressed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority on the lack of any activities conducted in French. The possibilities as regards organizing Top Management Dialogues and LMD workshops in French will be explored by the Project Manager. The SC also noted that several French-speaking countries had already participated in Project activities.

Support for Somalia

The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) informed the SC of a request by Somalia Customs to second 15 Customs staff to the KRA for a period of 8 weeks for Customs Valuation training. The SC took note of the request, but concluded that Customs Valuation did not fit into the scope of the Project activities, and no funds could be made available. The ESA-ROCB was encouraged to follow up on the issue and explore other options, possible donors and other cheaper solutions, including e-learning support.

Date and place of next meeting

The Malawi Revenue Authority kindly volunteered to host the next Steering Committee meeting, to be held at the end of January or the beginning of February 2015.
