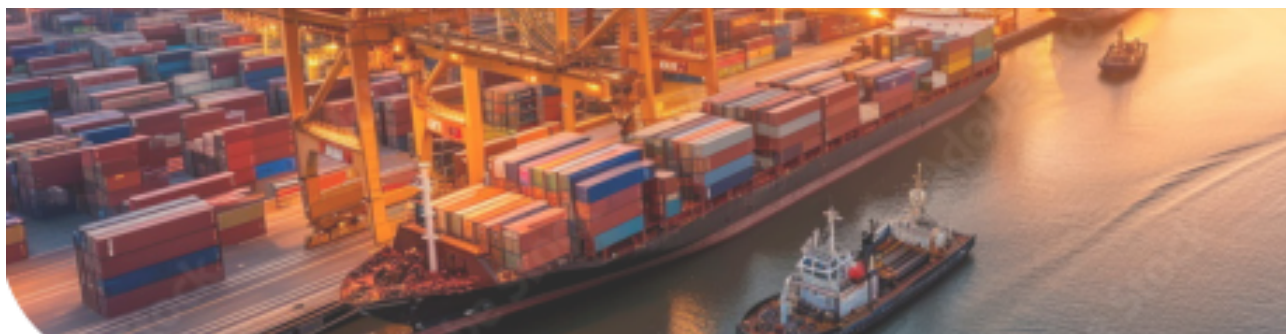




GLOBAL TRADE
FACILITATION
PROGRAMME



Warm greetings from Brussels! The second phase of the SECO-WCO Global Trade Facilitation Programme (GTFP-II) has already taken off, and we are delighted to share the latest news from our inception phase and activities in Bolivia, Colombia, Moldova, Mongolia, Peru, and Uzbekistan. With more countries coming on board at a later stage, the GTFP-II continues to foster and facilitate international trade by strengthening Customs' organizational capacities, supporting the implementation of efficient Customs procedures, and promoting continuous learning and the creation of public goods for the global Customs community.

LAUNCHING CEREMONY

On 22 February, a hybrid GTFP-II Launching Ceremony took place in Brussels, at the World Customs Organization (WCO) headquarters, gathering 40 participants. The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO) and the WCO expressed their sincere gratitude for the steadfast cooperation and dedication exhibited by the 15 beneficiary countries over the past five years, reaching notable advancements in international trade facilitation and organizational development. Likewise, they welcomed Phase II of the GTFP, building on the good results of the first phase and envisaging its continuation as a promoter for advancing international trade and Customs modernizing to comply with international standards, improve performance, reduce costs, and enhance transparency, benefiting trade and investment climate.



PLANNING MISSIONS AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION IN BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES

Setting the stage for GTFP-II success, the Programme's Team visited the identified beneficiary Customs administrations to establish a baseline, define specific objectives, ensure alignment with organizational priorities and strategic initiatives, and engage with public and private stakeholders to discuss their needs and priorities related to trade facilitation.

From 3 to 5 June, the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova (CSM) held the GTFP-II planning mission, where bilateral meetings took place with representatives of the Swiss Cooperation Office, the CSM and the Economic Council to review specific trade facilitation needs and priorities. Also, on 4 June, 20 participants from the public and private sectors were involved in the stakeholder workshop where the initial topics to support were mapped, pointing out matters like strategic planning, advance rulings, border agency cooperation, and time release study, among others.



On 11-14 June, the Customs Administration of Bolivia (AN) hosted the GTFP-II initial mission, which comprised managerial and technical meetings with the AN, as well as a hands-on workshop that gathered 26 participants, including representatives from the Swiss Embassy in Bolivia, cross-border regulatory agencies (CBRAs), National Committee on Trade Facilitation and the private sector. During the mission, a project roadmap for the country was drafted, including topics such as change management, customs-business consultations, e-commerce, coordinated border management, single window, valuation, etc.



From 1 to 5 July, the GTFP-II Team conducted the planning mission to the Customs General Administration of Mongolia (CGAM). Bipartite meetings with the CGAM management and technical teams were attended. Likewise, the private sector workshop on 2 July brought together 33 representatives from the public and private sectors. The drafted country roadmap highlighted topics to support, such as strategic planning, performance measurement, customs-business consultations, integrity, authorized economic operator, and time release study, among others.



From 29 July to 2 August, the Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan (CC) welcomed the GTFP-II initiation mission to present the Programme's goals and objectives to all stakeholders and identify potential support topics. The interactive workshop on 30 July gathered 17 representatives from various sectors, including the CC, CBRAs and the Association of Customs Brokers. The country roadmap included strategic planning, integrity, training on artificial intelligence, authorized economic operator, risk management, e-commerce, and time release study.



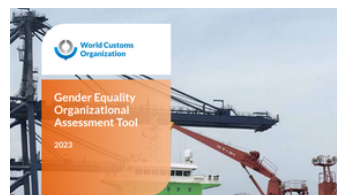
MERCATOR DIAGNOSTIC MISSION

From 15 to 23 July, the GTFP-II supported a Mercator Diagnostic mission to benefit the MCS in Chisinau, Moldova. Through bilateral meetings with the MCS, CBRAs, and the private sector, as well as field visits to strategic and tactical facilities, the WCO experts conducted a comprehensive assessment of Moldova's compliance with the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation. As a result, the main technical areas of assistance to be supported within the GTFP-II were identified, and the draft working plan for the implementation phase of the Programme was successfully developed.



WCO GENDER EQUALITY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT TOOLS

On 6 June, the GTFP-II funded a virtual session to introduce the latest edition of the Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT), launched in December 2023. The session provided participants from Bolivia, Moldova, Mongolia, and Uzbekistan with a deeper understanding of key concepts related to gender equality and diversity (GED) and their importance for Customs. We are pleased to announce that the Customs administrations of Bolivia, Moldova, and Mongolia have already submitted their GEOAT assessments, while Uzbekistan has developed its own gender action plan.



The Performance Measurement Mechanism (PMM) is a flagship initiative of the WCO, sponsored by the GTFP, aiming at supporting the organizational development of Customs administrations. Bolivia, Moldova, Mongolia, and Peru achieved significant progress in 2024, participating in the first Performance Measurement Mechanism cycle, submitting relevant data and nominating PMM National Contact Points. The GTFP-II has envisioned this topic as crucial and will integrate it into the strategic planning support to its beneficiary countries.