



## Healthy, happy and successful 2023!

Welcome to the fifth issue of the SECO-WCO Global Trade Facilitation Programme (GTFP) newsletter. A new promising year is here, and we move into this new chapter with renewed enthusiasm and optimism to continue working together with all of you to achieve our shared objective: improving trade facilitation.

We extend our warmest thanks to the GTFP family of national contact points, beneficiary countries, partners and friends for their hard work and remarkable dedication. The last 12 months have been full of lively activities and outstanding results we feel privileged to share with you, including 62 in-country capacity building activities delivered, the successful completion of the GTFP interventions in Bangladesh and Guatemala, and the welcoming of Jordan, Mongolia, Moldova, and Central America sub-region (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Panama) who joined the GTFP as beneficiary countries.

### Bangladesh

On 6 September, the National Board of Revenue of Bangladesh (NBR) proudly presented the results and recommendations of its first self-conducted Time Release Study (TRS) in a ceremony held in Dhaka, attended by over 500 representatives from public agencies, stakeholders, development partners, and the private sector.

This event marked the successful closing of the GTFP intervention, which began in February 2021 and aimed at strengthening the organizational and technical capacities of the NBR to successfully lead, plan and implement sustainable and transparent customs reforms, and apply international standards in particular those of the WCO and the WTO related to Trade Facilitation.



March 2022 - Time Release Study Workshop



September 2022 - TRS Report Dissemination Event



September 2022 - TRS Report Dissemination Event

### Bolivia

As part of the GTFP Work Plan in Bolivia, a series of capacity building activities were carried out during 2022 including, Strategic Planning support in February and June 2022, Study Visits to Colombia (28-30 June) and Peru (20-22 September) to exchange best practices on Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), Risk Management and Laboratory, a Leadership and Management Development (LMD) Top Executive Retreat (TER) from 29 July to 1 August, a TRS Workshop from 29 August to 2 September, as well as assistance missions on AEO (24-28 October), Single Window (5-9 September), Risk Management (12-16 December) and a follow-up Mercator mission (28 November to 1 December).

These activities have contributed to the implementation of the Customs Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of strategies and operations, the design of an Action Plan and Communication Strategy to enhance the AEO Programme, as well as the development of a Road Map for the National TRS.



December 2022 - Risk Management Workshop



June 2022 - Study Visit to Colombia



October 2022 - AEO Workshop

Additionally, the GTFP support has served the Customs Administration of Bolivia to review the progress made on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the WCO recommendations and tools to further improve Customs procedures.

### Colombia

The GTFP has effectively supported the Customs Administration of Colombia (DIAN) in its modernization process during 2022, through a Study Visit to Mexico (24-27 May) for the exchange of best practices on Risk Management, as well as a Trade Facilitation Forum in Bogota on 28 June, and follow-up assistance missions on Strategic Planning and Project Management (17-19 June), Integrity (16-19 August), and Post-Control Audit (PCA) in October and November.

As a result, the Customs Administration of Colombia has adopted 22 KPIs and an integrated control panel to monitor progress. The country has also enhanced its Risk Management procedures, Customs Training Plan, and Integrity Strategy, in line with the WCO best practices and recommendations.

Moreover, Colombia has contributed to fostering Customs collaboration and cross-border cooperation among GTFP countries, sharing its lessons learned on NTFC and Customs procedures and hosting the Customs Administration of Bolivia in June for a Study Visit.



October 2022 - Post-clearance audit follow-up



August 2022 - Integrity Strategy Workshop



December 2022 - National Programme Steering Committee

## Guatemala

On 10 March, Guatemala became the 131st Contracting Party to the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) after its accession to the Convention which officially concluded the GTFP support in the country.



March 2022 - Revised Kyoto Convention Management Committee's Meeting



March 2022 - Exchange of views on closing of the intervention

The GTFP collaboration with the Customs Administration of Guatemala (SAT) initiated in 2020 and consisted of short-term assistance, focused on trade facilitation and enhancement through modern and efficient Customs procedures by complying with international standards and best practices, specifically the WCO RKC.

## Peru

The GTFP and the Customs Administration of Peru (SUNAT) have been working together to successfully complete the agreed 2022 work plan which included a Study Visit to Argentina on Coordinated Border Management (CBM) from 12 to 15 July, and assistance activities on CBM procedures (5-9 September), Strategic Planning (12-13 October) and TRS (14-18 November), as well as a follow-up Mercator mission from 23 to 25 November.

The GTFP support led to the implementation of a Customs Strategic Map, measurable KPIs and the development of draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for enhancing national border cooperation. Significant progress was also achieved by Peru on several provisions of the WTO TFA, especially those related to coordination with other stakeholders and Risk Management.



July 2022 - Study Visit to Argentina



September 2022 - CBM Workshop



November 2022 - Follow-up Mercator Mission

A special recognition to the Customs Administration of Peru for promoting peer-to-peer collaboration among Customs Administrations in the region and kindly hosted a Study Visit of the Customs Administration of Bolivia last September.

## Serbia

The Customs Administration of the Republic of Serbia (CAS) benefited from the GTFP assistance during 2022, strengthened its institutional capacities through support activities focused on key issues such as Risk Management (9-13 May), Human Resources Management (HRM) (28 August-2 September) and AEO (5-9 September).

These activities have equipped and empowered the CAS to develop a Risk Management Strategic Plan and Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Risk Management Committee, and to design an AEO Action Plan for further improving the AEO program and effectively disseminate its benefits among traders. Furthermore, the WCO recommendations have served the CAS to establish the foundations and roll-out of a measurable HRM modernization work plan based on WCO standards and international best practices.



November 2022 - National Programme Steering Committee



The CAS actively participated in WCO meetings and activities in 2022, kindly presenting its experience and perspective on the GTFP remote support during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



May 2022 - Workshop on Risk Management



September 2022 - AEO Workshop

## Uzbekistan

The GTFP has determinedly supported the modernization efforts of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan (SCC), providing capacity building assistance and support activities focused on the country's trade facilitation priorities including, Single Window (21-25 March), Strategic Planning (4-8 April), PCA (30 May to 3 June) and TRS (6-10 June).

Following the recommendations issued by the WCO experts, the SCC has developed and adopted a Customs Strategic Action Plan endorsed by the President of Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the SCC established PCA Standard Operation Procedures, enhanced its existing National Single Window, and designed and implemented an Action Plan for its first TRS.



March 2022 - Workshop on Single Window



May 2022 - Post-clearance audit (PCA) Workshop.



November 2022 - National Programme Steering Committee

## Warm Welcome to Jordan, Moldova, Mongolia, and Central America Sub-Region

On 16 May, the Jordan Customs Department welcomed the support of the GTFP to assist in developing a procedure for the expedited release of goods entered through air cargo facilities, in line with the WTO TFA Article 7.8 on Expedited Shipments.

4 July marked the official launching of the GTFP in Mongolia, aiming to support the Mongolian Customs General Administration in strengthening the application of Risk Management in Customs control, aligned with WCO instruments and tools, and international best practices.



May 2022 - Kick-off Light-Touch Intervention in Jordan



July 2022 - Kick-off Light-Touch Intervention in Mongolia

In turn, the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova also joined the GTFP on 19 September. The purpose of this assistance is to support Moldova in enhancing its Customs procedures for the rapid release of relief consignments and humanitarian aid.

The Customs Administrations of El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama became members of the GTFP family on 27 September, within the GTFP sub-regional intervention in Central America, aimed at developing national and regional Customs capacities for the implementation of international standards related to simplification and harmonization of Customs procedures, in line with the RKC.



September 2022 - Kick-off Light-Touch Intervention in Moldova



September 2022 - Kick-off Light-Touch Intervention in Central America

## Global and Regional Support

From 1-4 February, the GTFP jointly with the WCO, the WTO, and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) held the **Second Meeting of Latin American National Trade Facilitation Committees (NCTFs)**, with the participation of 200 government officials who exchanged experiences on trade facilitation post-COVID-19 and explored possible areas of collaboration.



A **Strategic Planning Virtual Workshop** for the Beneficiary Countries of the GTFP was conducted on 8 and 9 February gathering over 67 participants. This was a unique occasion to bring all GTFP countries together to share their views and exchange experiences on strategic planning, creating new cooperation ties and strengthening the existing ones.

The conclusions of this workshop and concrete recommendations on Strategic Planning are available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Russian](#).



The GTFP supported the translation of the **e-learning course on Advancing Gender Equality** into Spanish and Russian. The course aims to raise awareness of gender equality and its links to Customs reform and modernization, and it is now available on WCO CLiKC! Platform for all WCO Members.



After a long wait due to the pandemic, the successful conclusion of the **3rd and 4th Editions of the Advanced Course on Tax and Customs Administration Management** took place in Guatemala, from 17 to 28 October with the participation of over 40 Tax and Customs senior officials from 10 countries.

This course is a joint initiative between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through its Technical Assistance Center for Central America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic (CAPTAC-DR); the Institute of Fiscal Studies of Spain (IEF), with the collaboration of the National Distance Education University (UNED), the WCO and the GTFP.



The GTFP hosted the WCO Sub-regional **Virtual Workshop on Integrity** for the Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas region from 7 to 9 March. More than 100 participants from 18 countries analysed common challenges in the implementation of Transparency and Predictability measures in Customs.

With these inputs, the GTFP issued a Map of Integrity Initiatives for the Americas and the Caribbean region available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

### MAP OF INTEGRITY INITIATIVES IN THE AMERICAS

From 10 to 11 October, the WCO with the support of the GTFP, successfully organized the **HCM Global Conference** with the theme of Well-being at Work – Taking care of our Human Capital. The conference brought together over 1200 participants from the public and private sector and served as a platform for sharing and collecting international best practices relating to well-being at work and staff and organizational resilience.



The GTFP supported the development of the new **WCO Leadership and Management Development (LMD) e-learning module** intended to develop and promote a leadership-oriented culture in Customs organizations. Available in English, French, Spanish and Russian on the WCO CLiKC! E-learning platform.



From 8 to 9 December 2022, a **Sub-regional Workshop on Coordinated Border Management (CBM)** was held at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, with the participation of 22 Customs officials from 11 countries. For two days, the participants reviewed the essential elements of CBM and analysed the latest developments at the WCO and the future of border cooperation.



We are pleased to present the GTFP video, which highlights the Programme's accomplishments, check it out [here](#)!

You can find more information about the GTFP by checking our webpage [here](#).

