

HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD WTO TFA Capacity Building Programme

Newsletter April 2016 Issue 1

In this issue:

- *Welcome note*
- *Understanding the TFA*
- *Expert accreditation Workshop for MPAs*
- *Field mission in Sudan*
- *Upcoming*

Welcome note

This newsletter will provide you with updated information on the activities carried out in the framework of the **HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Trade Facilitation Capacity Building Programme**. This programme is a partnership between Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC), the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to support developing and least-developed countries to implement the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

UK Government has committed up to £3.000.000 over three years (2015 -2018) to support the programme.

The programme will provide opportunities for:

- **Tailor-made Capacity Building** on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement using WCO instruments and tools under the auspices of the **Mercator Programme***
- Access to a **broad range of experts**, specialized in the implementation of TFA provisions and the use of WCO instruments and tools
- Specific support to the establishment and operation of **National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs)**, as mandated by the TFA.

In each Newsletter you will find three articles presenting the **main activities, statements from partners and participants** as well as information about **upcoming missions**.



Mercator Programme

A Navigational Map for Trade Facilitation

The **Mercator Programme** was launched by WCO in 2014 to support expeditious and harmonized TFA implementation using core WCO instruments and tools, such as the Revised Kyoto Convention.

It offers tailor-made technical assistance and capacity building over longer periods and is designed to allow for effective coordination between the WCO, the WTO and other key international trade facilitation stakeholders.



"A ground-breaking capacity building partnership project with WCO and UNCTAD to help developing countries Customs Authorities and other concerned stakeholders to implement the WTO TFA is considered a top Government priority for global economic development." (HMRC)

Expert Accreditation Workshop

A first pilot workshop was held in Lincoln, United Kingdom, in September aimed at identifying UK based experts possessing the necessary skills to become not only **Customs Modernization Advisers** but also **Mercator Programme Advisers (MPA)** with ability to support the WCO members implementing the TFA.

After this first workshop **4 out of 8 participants** were assessed as suitable to go into the second step of the process, go on a country mission. One of the experts, Paul Biddis from the UK participated in a Scoping mission to Nepal mid-February.

Coming next: To further expand the pool of experts the programme is planning to organize MPA accreditation events for **up to 25 experts**.

“Our scoping week in Kathmandu was a challenging yet successful one. Although each day brought unexpected changes we worked the situation and by the end of the week had agreement with the Customs Director General of five TFA measures where the WCO could support in capacity building.”



Paul Biddis

MPA expert participated in Scoping Mission to Nepal 15-18th of February 2016

“It was a really great opportunity for me and all participants to attend this workshop, not only because of the valuable information on assessing the needs of the TFA but also for participating in the brainstorming and discussion of the working group which represent all stakeholders. The interaction with the trainers was very good and brought an added-value to the event. One of the trainers came out with the following sentence, ‘When Sudanese trade, Sudan eases trade’ which is very optimistic.”



Rasha Osman

NTFC member, participated in the workshop in Khartoum 2-3rd of December 2016

TFA Scoping mission in Sudan

Following an invitation from the Ministry of Trade and Sudan Customs, a team of HMRC, WCO and UNCTAD experts conducted a scoping mission to Khartoum to update the country's **national trade facilitation plan** and prepare further trade-related technical assistance.

Close to **100 representatives** from Sudan Customs and other key public and private sector stakeholders participated in the event and discussed the priorities of trade facilitation reforms.

The event concluded with a **forward plan** to support the NCTF and Sudan Customs in the effective and sustainable implementation of trade facilitation measures with **seven specific interventions** planned for 2016.

The first intervention was held 7-10 of March and concluded in the establishment of a competency-based **Customs training strategy** for the National Academy of Customs Sciences and Technology in Sudan. This strategy integrates TFA-related training for Customs officers and other public and private sector stakeholders.



For more information:

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WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

Upcoming activities:

- Forward plan for Zimbabwe established with at least 4 potential interventions in 2016 and further planned engagements in 2017
- Identifying further opportunities for MPAs to contribute to Capacity Building missions
- Ongoing dialogues with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Myanmar and Yemen

More information:

<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/wco-implementing-the-wto-atf.aspx>