



HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD WTO TFA Capacity Building Programme

Main Programme achievements *March to May 2017*

- Extensive progress in the implementation of the Mercator Plan for **Ethiopia** resulting in increased understanding of the specific deficiencies and practical solutions in the administration's risk management, post clearance audit, valuation and classification functions, including proposals to better integrate the functions, along with progress in translating critical WCO training materials in these areas into Amharic.
- Advancement in the delivery of the Mercator Plan for **Sierra Leone** with foundations for improved risk-based targeting through the WCO's nCEN application as well as practical solutions to improve the post-clearance audit function.
- Strengthened foundational capacities of the emergent **Palestinian** Customs administration to establish TFA-compliant risk profiling on the basis of sound compliance management and appropriate training and human resources management.
- Enhanced skills of the **Afghanistan** Customs Department to formulate an Afghanistan-specific strategic plan for the period of 2018 - 2022, taking into account TFA imperatives emerging from the country's recent accession to the WTO and the unique security and institutional challenges in the country.
- Improved project management competencies among key Mercator contact points in **Zimbabwe** and **Sierra Leone**, allowing for a better strategic integration of various domestic and internationally-supported Customs reform projects into an overarching strategic plan.
- Increased alignment of **Pakistan's** locally developed Customs Management System with WCO Data Model standards, allowing for improved standardization and the emergence of a TFA-compliant National Single Window in Pakistan.
- Also, read the article "[WCO Mercator Programme: Pioneering innovative partnerships](#)" in the latest edition of the **WCO news magazine**



Mercator Programme A Navigational Map for Trade Facilitation

The **Mercator Programme**, launched by WCO in 2014 aims at supporting expeditious and harmonized implementation of the WTO Agreement for Trade Facilitation (TFA) using core WCO instruments and tools, such as the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC).

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.

The HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD programme, financially supported by the Government of the United Kingdom via Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), operates under the auspices of the Mercator Programme and assists developing countries in the implementation of the TFA.



The HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme continues to support its priority countries through building capacity, particularly around Post-Clearance Audit (PCA) and Time-Release Study (TRS) through the use of dedicated experts; and ongoing support on establishing and managing an NCTF under the UNCTAD Empowerment programme.

(Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)

Post Clearance Audit Sierra Leone

In line with the Mercator Plan for Sierra Leone, and to ensure alignment with WCO Standards on PCA and Article 7.5 of the TFA, the WCO delivered a needs assessment mission to identify gaps of the National Revenue Authority's (NRA)'s PCA implementation. Through bilateral meetings with more than 10 departments and units of the NRA dealing with PCA, including Customs Central Services, Enforcement, Risk Management, IT, ASYCUDA among others, the mission team could identify current disparities and develop recommendations for forward PCA support. This assistance will allow the NRA to develop an effective and efficient PCA function which is considered critical for delivering results oriented support and comply with the provisions of the TFA.



"Working as an Mercator Programme Advisor (MPA) in Ethiopia has turned out to be a fascinating endeavour. Increased and improved commitment, communication and engagements by ERCA and the internal coordination within the ERCA directorates has proven the Mercator Programme to be a success story in Ethiopia; the Deputy Director General of Customs, Mr Moges Balcha, has also attested to that. A multi-year plan developed last year has seen the WCO visiting Ethiopia almost ten times in a period of one year. I have ensured that the process is as inclusive as possible, sustainability, continuity, sequencing and building on previous interventions."

Gugu Dlamini-Zwane,
Technical Attaché, Swaziland Revenue Authority and lead MPA for Ethiopia



Fathimath Abdul Rahman
Superintendent/Maldives Customs Service, WCO PCA Expert

Mercator Programme Support in Ethiopia

In the past quarter, the HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Programme has seen a rapid increase in its implementation of capacity building support for Ethiopia in line with the Mercator Plan established for the country in May 2016. In the past months, four missions have been delivered, providing assistance in a variety of areas including Time Release Study, Post-Clearance Audit, Risk Management, Classification and Rules of Origin, all of which ultimately expedite the implementation of the WTO's Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA).

The different missions, which have included both needs assessments and trainings have aimed at providing targeted guidance to ERCA, based on the current needs of the Administration. As a result, the different units have gained an increased knowledge of WCO instruments and tools as well as international standards and are thereby better equipped to lead reform and modernization work to align their processes and procedures with the TFA.

- Read about the Advanced Ruling System workshop and the Risk Management Diagnostic in Ethiopia in [WCO newsroom](#)

"The National Revenue Authority (NRA) of Sierra Leone has a very promising workforce consisting of young and committed officers with good educational background. These officers working at the forefront as Manager are helping the Administration to effectively achieve its goals and shows that Sierra Leone has a bright future ahead. Being part of this mission, I learnt a lot from them, especially how to manage day to day duties systematically in a harsh work environment."

Upcoming activities:

- Mercator Programme Advisor workshop in Brussels
- nCEN installation and training in Sierra Leone
- Monitoring & Evaluation of the tailor made Mercator Implementation Plan for Zimbabwe and the Mercator support provided to Palestine
- Post Clearance Audit follow-up in Ethiopia
- Time-Release Study support to Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Sudan
- Leadership Management Development workshop in Ethiopia
- PCA-support mission to Sudan
- Risk Management diagnostic support to Sudan

More information:

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



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