

**Third Sub-Regional Workshop  
Closure of the C-RED Project and consolidation of regional  
cooperation in humanitarian crisis situations**

**17-19 September 2018  
Conakry, Guinea**

**Mission Report**



## **1. Background of the project**

In 2016, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands entered into an agreement to support WCO Members in the West Africa region affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), namely Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali, Senegal and Nigeria. The overall goal of the innovative WCO project "Customs for Relief of Epidemic Diseases" (C-RED) is to provide Customs Administrations with personalized assistance to build capacities and increase preparedness so that the effects of epidemic diseases and natural disasters can be minimized. The C-RED Project is implemented by the WCO in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) within the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed between the two organizations in 2010.

The first regional workshop, held in Freetown between 1 and 4 November 2016, was aimed at identifying the challenges encountered during the Ebola crisis and proposing areas for improvement which could serve as launch pads for the project in the various countries. The second workshop was held in Dakar between 7 and 9 May 2018, and allowed attendees to share updates on the progress made since the project began and to develop action plans for building on this progress. Attendees also acknowledged the valuable work done by the ECOWAS Commission, and made a number of undertakings to expand the project's scope from sub-regional to regional (see the minutes of the second workshop, available on the C-RED Project page on the WCO's website).

The Guinean Customs Administration was responsible for the logistical planning of the third and last sub-regional workshop, which was held in Conakry. Representatives of the country extended an extremely warm welcome to attendees at the event, which took place in the Riviera Royal Hotel between 17 and 19 September 2018.

A total of 30 attendees were present, representing the following organizations (a full list is included in Annex 1):

- the WCO Secretariat,
- the six Customs Administrations of the beneficiary countries,
- two other government bodies from each country (Ministry of Health and emergency coordination and management agency),
- UN OCHA,
- the Red Cross and WFP Guinea,
- the ECOWAS Commission.

## **2. Opening ceremony and introductory remarks**

The workshop was opened by **His Excellency Mr. Ismaël Dioubaté (Budget Minister)**, accompanied by his senior officials, during a ceremony which received media coverage. The Director General of Customs and representatives of the WCO Secretariat and OCHA then took the floor with introductory remarks which emphasized the significance of the project and the huge amount of interest it had generated in all of the beneficiary countries. Standing in front of a banner prepared for the occasion, the speakers expressed their warm thanks to the Dutch Government in its capacity as Donor, and to all those still working on the project. The WCO thanked Guinea for the warm welcome which had been extended to attendees, and for having organized the workshop so efficiently. The Budget Minister was also

thanked for attending the opening ceremony, proof of the importance that Guinea gives to the project dedicated to facilitation of import of humanitarian response.

The speakers welcomed the progress which had been made at national level under this project, and expressed their hope that the final workshop would provide an opportunity for positive and constructive debate. Journalists from Guinean national television were present during the workshop's opening and closing ceremonies, and an official photograph (see cover photograph) was taken immediately after the first of these ceremonies.

The workshop was chaired by Mr. Samson Bilangna, representative of the WCO Secretariat, with the assistance of Ms. Eve Gérard, Project Manager, and Ms. Virginie Bohl, representative of OCHA. After an explanation of the workshop's objectives and adoption of the agenda (see Annex 2), all of the representatives were asked to introduce themselves.

The Project Manager thanked attendees for being present, and reiterated the workshop's main objectives:

- review of the activities carried out by each country and ECOWAS since the inception of the C-RED Project;
- strengthening of cooperation and potential synergies between beneficiary countries, ECOWAS and humanitarian stakeholders;
- development of communication tools for improved future management of national and regional alerts/emergencies.

Work then progressed in line with the agenda for the workshop.

### **3. Review of the C-RED Project**

The Project Manager gave a presentation covering the various activities which had been carried out by the beneficiary countries (see Working Document 1 in Annex 3).

She noted that funding had been granted at national level in five out of the six countries, making it possible to:

- analyse the legal framework and existing procedures,
- identify the main bottlenecks affecting the importation and Customs clearance of humanitarian aid,
- recommend the introduction of procedures recognized at international level,
- assist in the drafting of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

After the presentation, the floor was opened for discussion. It was strongly recommended that international legal instruments relating (at least in part) to the Customs clearance of relief goods should be ratified, since they formed a useful impetus for regulatory progress at national level.

It was suggested that action should be taken at the highest possible level, given that the task of securing ratification or recognition of the annexes to these Conventions was a challenging one in the majority of countries.

- *The WCO agreed that the C-RED Project completion letters would include updates on the status of ratification in each country; it furthermore undertook to recommend strongly to the Directors General/Controllers General that ratification take place as soon as possible.*

Speakers also referred to the importance of the SOPs as a repository of information on the regulations which apply to relief goods. It was proposed that logos or emblems for the C-RED Project, the WCO and OCHA as well as those of the country in question should be included on their cover sheets or title pages in the interests of harmonization. It was furthermore suggested that a description of the C-RED Project be added as an annex.

- *The WCO agreed that copies of the various logos and the C-RED flyer would be supplied to the contact persons in electronic format.*

The Project Manager then explained that it had been possible to organize week-long training courses in three countries (Nigeria, Guinea and Mali) on the SOPs, and that these courses had been attended by their principal future users from the public and private sectors. The courses had been supplemented by a "train-the-trainer" day during which a small group of attendees had been taught how to provide training on the manual. One simulation exercise per country had been organized during the training courses in order to ensure that the procedures had been implemented properly. In Nigeria, the C-RED Project funded for the development of a video game which helped players to understand the key principles underpinning the SOPs; and Mali received funding for a smartphone application providing access to information on Customs regulations, with one tab devoted to relief goods.

A representative of Nigeria (Mr. Siman Nimdul) and a representative of Guinea (Mr. Pevé Touré) welcomed the organization of these week-long training courses, and strongly recommended that similar courses be organized in future.

Attendees were then asked to list the outstanding activities which still remained to be done during the final reporting phase of the Project. Alongside the workshop proper, the Project Manager held bilateral talks with each delegation during which she requested the name of a contact person from the editorial team who would be responsible for tracking these final activities and drafting the final report to be presented to the Steering Committee in December. Activities which remained to be completed in the majority of countries included the following:

- finalizing and/or validating the SOPs,
- carrying out simulation exercises,
- planning the provision of training on the SOPs,
- establishing a national and regional network (and choosing a platform to do so).

Dr. Coulibaly from Mali criticized the lack of transparency regarding the political validation of the manual submitted to the Budget Minister. A debate on this point revealed that the manual had entered into operational effect as soon as it had been validated by the parties involved in drafting it, and so there was no need for a political or regulatory procedure. The countries were, however, at their liberty to issue inter-ministerial orders or decrees which were binding on all the government agencies involved in order to ensure compliance with the procedures set out in the manual. The English-speaking countries expressed their opinion that publication and dissemination of the manual would be sufficient once the relevant Administrations had been made aware of its existence.

#### **4. Challenges encountered by the Administrations during the C-RED Project**

Attendees were divided into three groups:

1. representatives of the Customs Administrations,
2. representatives of the Ministries of Health,
3. representatives of the national emergency management agencies and others.

Each group was asked to respond to the following questions:

- (a) Which challenges had they encountered in relation to management of the C-RED Project?
- (b) Which recommendations would they make for the future?
- (c) How would they recommend minimising these challenges in future?

The responses presented by each group were later compiled by the WCO and are set out in Working Document 2 (in Annex 4 to this Report). Attendees stressed the importance of the networks/contacts which the project had made it possible to establish in the various countries, and recommended that they be maintained with a view to ensuring continuity in this area within the Administrations and monitoring regulatory developments which might have an impact on the SOPs.

### **5. Leveraging of know-how, experience and knowledge**

Working in groups (one group per country and one group with humanitarian representatives and ECOWAS representatives), attendees reviewed the outcomes of the C-RED Project and the added value it had delivered, and discussed ways of improving similar initiatives in the future.

During the following plenary session, each delegation gave a brief overview of the findings from these discussions, which were compiled by the OCHA representative and are set out in Working Document 3 (Annex 5 to this Report).

The Chairperson of the workshop referred to the possibility of using the length of time taken to release goods as a performance indicator for the project.

- *The countries were asked to incorporate procedures for measuring this indicator into their future simulation exercises.*

Guinea emphasized the importance of awareness-raising measures aimed at ensuring the sustainable future application of the key principles outlined in the manual/SOPs, and made it clear that each country should be aware of its responsibilities in this area. Guinea undertook to arrange monthly meetings between the contact persons and to revise the manual on an annual basis with a view to ensuring that these responsibilities could be met. Other countries stated that they planned to follow Guinea's example.

### **6. Information needs**

Attendees were divided into three groups:

- (a) a French-speaking group,
- (b) an English-speaking group,
- (c) a group of humanitarian representatives.

The groups were given the task of drafting an operational document summarizing the main information required by Customs Administrations, other national administrations and humanitarian representatives in the hours and days following emergency and developing procedures for the sharing of this information. The outcome can be found in Working Document 4 (Annex 6 to this Report).

Mali explained that it already operated an early intervention centre which was responsible for dialogue and coordination with ECOWAS and other countries in the area of emergency preparedness. In Mali's opinion, the network set up under the C-RED Project was more technical in nature.

Mr. Hanounou (the ECOWAS representative) gave an overview of the measures carried out at regional level, including the incorporation of Annex J-5 to the Revised Kyoto Convention into the Regional Customs Code and the operation of an ECOWAS fund for countries affected by humanitarian and health emergencies. He explained that the scope of ECOWAS activities also covered links between transit systems in order to facilitate the movement of goods between Member States.

Attendees highlighted the importance of integrating the outcomes of the project into existing regional structures.

- *ECOWAS will clarify the roles played by its various bodies in this area and consider how best to maintain the momentum achieved at regional level.*

Attendees were asked for suggestions of ways in which comprehension and ownership of the manual could be improved in order to ensure that it would be used as broadly as possible.

## **7. Emergency platforms**

A discussion was held on the establishment of national and regional platforms which would allow networking and the prompt exchange of information in the event of an emergency. The OCHA representative suggested that it would be advisable to appoint contact persons who would post messages to these platforms and be responsible for exchanging information. A discussion was held on how exactly these platforms should be used in practice. The outcome of the discussion can be found in Annex 7 to this Report.

## **8. Follow-up measures for the C-RED Project in Africa**

The Project manager presented the last activities to carry out by the end of the year. The C-RED Project takes official end on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Between this date and the Steering Committee which will take place on 17 December 2018, the WCO, with the help of a drafting team including the focal point of each country as well as two representatives of the humanitarian community, will draft a final activity report and a final financial report regarding the C-RED Project. In this respect, the WCO will be weekly in contact with the contact points in order to follow-up on outstanding activities and the implementation of the national Action Plans as foreseen bilaterally during the workshop. The beneficiary countries can take advantage of the last months to present even more results.

The Project manager underlined that beneficiary countries should own the project to make it sustainable and build up on outputs.

The WCO and ECOWAS representatives then outlined possible follow-up measures for the project. The WCO representative stated that she had been in talks with the Dutch Government on the possibility of incorporating a pillar relating to the Customs clearance of relief goods into a global trade facilitation programme for West Africa. The Netherlands would in this way act not only as a donor, but also as a lobbyist for inclusion of this topic in the new programme.

- *As a stakeholder in this future programme, ECOWAS was asked to support the WCO's efforts in this area.*

The ECOWAS representative also suggested that the ECOWAS Commission should be urged to include this subject and the supply of PPE on their future agenda.

- *The WCO was asked to supply ECOWAS with the cost-related details of measures implemented under the C-RED Project with a view to estimating future financial requirements. The WCO will forward the financial reports for the C-RED Project to ECOWAS.*

The representative from Guinea suggested that attempts should be made in parallel to gain support from the African Union. She also proposed that representatives of the C-RED+ Project should be present at the next WCO donor meeting with a view to draw the Donors' attention to the importance of such activity and proactively identifying other sources of funding.

The Chairperson summed up the discussion by stating that ECOWAS and the other attendees were in favour of continuing the project and extending it to include more countries in the region, provided that the necessary funding could be obtained. One potential solution to the problem of funding could be the incorporation of the C-RED+ Project into a global trade facilitation programme for West Africa which would have multiple donors (Netherlands, Germany, World Bank, etc.)

#### **9. Exchange of experience, evaluation of the workshop and closing ceremony**

The Chairperson concluded the workshop by stating that the objectives set for the workshop – reviewing the project and identifying potential avenues for building on its outcomes in future – had been achieved. The attendees filled out feedback forms, in which they expressed a high level of overall satisfaction with the workshop and their general optimism about the future, as well as rating highly the organizational arrangements for the workshop and the working conditions there.

Recommendations considered as very important were approved by way of a conclusion, and would be widely disseminated after the workshop by the participants within their Authority (see Annex 8).

The closing ceremony involved the hoisting of flags by the Director General of Customs and a closing speech given by the Deputy Director General of Customs. A motion of thanks was also moved by Ms. Sira Malé (representing the beneficiary countries) and by the Project Manager. Thanks were given to the Kingdom of the Netherlands as backer of the C-RED Project, the WCO, OCHA and the Republic of Guinea, and reference was made to the vital importance of ensuring the continuity of the project. Certificates were then handed out as acknowledgement of the attendees' active participation in the workshop.

The WCO wishes to extend its warm thanks to the ECOWAS and OCHA experts for their invaluable support in organizing the workshop.

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### Annex 1: List of participants

Pays/Organisation	Nom	Mail	Position
WCO - Brussels	Eve Gerard	<a href="mailto:eve.gerard@wcoomd.org">eve.gerard@wcoomd.org</a>	C-Red - Project Manager
WCO - Brussels	Samsom Bilangna	<a href="mailto:samson.bilangna@wcoomd.org">samson.bilangna@wcoomd.org</a>	Administrateur technique principal
Guinée (9)	Lt/Col Péné Touré	<a href="mailto:tourepeve648@gmail.com">tourepeve648@gmail.com</a>	Douane - Focal Point C-Red project
	Mohamed Sekou Samoura	<a href="mailto:samourasekoumohamed@gmail.com">samourasekoumohamed@gmail.com</a>	Douane - Direction de la Législation, de la Règlementation et des Relations Internationales.
	Aboubacar Sidiki Sidibe	<a href="mailto:Aboubac315@gmail.com">Aboubac315@gmail.com</a>	Douane - Assistant service, Communication
	Mamadou Aliou Bah	<a href="mailto:delhadjbah@yahoo.fr">delhadjbah@yahoo.fr</a>	SENAH
	Docteur Thiany Camara	<a href="mailto:crathia2014@gmail.com">crathia2014@gmail.com</a>	AN sécurité sanitaire - Chef département logistique
	Sekou Doukouré	<a href="mailto:sdouk22@gmail.com">sdouk22@gmail.com</a>	Police - en service à l'aéroport International de Conakry Gbessia
	Dougo Goepogui	<a href="mailto:fostergoepogui@gmail.com">fostergoepogui@gmail.com</a>	Min. Santé, Chef section prévention et lutte contre la maladie
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	Lieutenant Payard	-	Douanes
		-	
Liberia (3)	William L. Buku	<a href="mailto:william.buku@lra.gov.lr">william.buku@lra.gov.lr</a>	Customs - C RED focal point
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Mali (3)	Nouh Dougnon	<a href="mailto:nouh.dougnon@yahoo.fr">nouh.dougnon@yahoo.fr</a>	expert C-RED - Douanes
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	-		
Nigeria (2)	Siman Nimdul	<a href="mailto:simannimdul@yahoo.co.uk">simannimdul@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Customs - Focal Point C-Red project
	Abdulhameed Wosilat	<a href="mailto:pharmwosilat@yahoo.com">pharmwosilat@yahoo.com</a>	Ministry of Health
Senegal (3)	Souleymane SANE	<a href="mailto:ssane@douanes.sn">ssane@douanes.sn</a>	Douane - Chef du Bureau du Contentieux et des Relations financières avec l'Étranger
	El Hadji Tidiane DIALLO	<a href="mailto:tidianedcl@gmail.com">tidianedcl@gmail.com</a>	Direction de la Police de l'Air et des Frontières
	Beydi Diop	<a href="mailto:beydidiop200@yahoo.fr">beydidiop200@yahoo.fr</a>	Chef de la Division Qualité (Service national d'Hygiène).
Sierra Leone (2)	Ibrahim KAMBAIMA	<a href="mailto:sahrkam@yahoo.com">sahrkam@yahoo.com</a>	Customs - Focal point C-RED -Assistant Director-Monitoring Research and Planning Department
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ECOWAS (1)	Djibrill Hanounou	<a href="mailto:dhanounou@yahoo.fr">dhanounou@yahoo.fr</a>	ECOWAS Customs
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	Fara Michel Ouendeno	<a href="mailto:michel.ouendeno@wfp.org">michel.ouendeno@wfp.org</a>	PAM
	Mamoudou Alpha Bah	<a href="mailto:crg.fleet@gmail.com">crg.fleet@gmail.com</a>	Croix-Rouge, Guinée
	Youssouf Traoré	<a href="mailto:traoreyoussouf2009@gmail.com">traoreyoussouf2009@gmail.com</a>	Président Croix-Rouge, Guinée

## Annex 2: Program

### Day 1 – Monday 17 September 2018

08:30 - 10:00	Arrival of participants, registration Opening speeches Photos, welcome drink	Guinea, WCO, OCHA
10h – 10h30	Tour de table and adoption of the agenda of the workshop	
10:30 11:00	<b>PART 1: GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT</b>  The project manager presents the activities carried out under the C-RED Project and indicates what remains to be done in each beneficiary country (comparative table).  The presentation is followed by a discussion.	Working document n° 1  (Eve Gérard)
11:00 12:30	<b>PART 2 – CHALLENGES, POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  <u>Establishment of three working groups if possible as follows:</u> - WG with the representative of Customs administrations - WG with the representatives of the Ministry of health - WG with the representatives of “National Disaster Management Authority” or other  The objectives of this session are: (a) to discuss the challenges they had in the management of the C-RED project (b) to define recommendations / solutions for the future. How to minimize these challenges?  International and regional organizations, the donor and INGOs join the different groups in accordance with their mandate.	Working document n° 2 (Virginie Bohl)
12:30 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 14:30	A rapporteur presents the work of the first working group	Completion of working document n°2
14:30 15:00	A rapporteur presents the work of the second working group	Completion of working document n°2
15:00 15:30	A rapporteur presents the work of the third working group	finalization of working document n°2
15:30 16:00	Coffee break	
16:00	<b><u>PART 3 – CAPITALIZING ON KNOW HOW.</u></b>	Working document

17:30	<p><b><u>EXPERIENCES and KNOWLEDGE</u></b></p> <p>Each beneficiary country, humanitarian and international organizations will analyze the outputs, explain the added value of the C-RED activities and make recommendations.</p> <p><u>Three different working groups:</u> the English speaking countries together, the French speaking countries together and the other participants together.</p> <p>The objectives of this session are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to allow each beneficiary country, humanitarian and international humanitarian organizations to draw the benefits of the C-RED project,</li> <li>(b) to make recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>At the end of the day, the organizers compile all the information in order to draft a document. It will be presented on Day 2, in plenary, for discussions, comments, questions, additions.</p> <p>The objective of this document is to serve as a basis for future proposals.</p>	n° 3
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**DAY 2 - Tuesday 18 September 2018**

09:00 10:30	<p><b><u>PART 3 – CAPITALIZING ON KNOW HOW, EXPERIENCES and KNOWLEDGE (continued)</u></b></p> <p>A French speaking country and an English speaking country make a presentation of the final document. Q&amp;A</p>	Presentation of working document n° 3
10:30 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 12:30	<p><b><u>PART 4 – INFORMATION NEEDS</u></b></p> <p><u>Discussions in three groups:</u> (a) a French-speaking group (b) an English-speaking group (c) a group of humanitarian actors.</p> <p>The objective of this session is to identify the information needs of the Customs Administrations, of the other Ministries as well as the information needs of the humanitarian actors, in advance to the arrival of humanitarian aid,.</p>	Working document n°4
12 :30 14 :00	Lunch break	

14 :00 14 :30	The French-speaking group presents the result of their work The English-speaking group comments and adds to the First group presentation.	
14 :30 15 :00	Plenary session with humanitarian adding additional points.  Opening a discussion on the final document.	A final document is presented and will be used for each future emergency.
15:30 16:00	Coffee break	
16 :00 17 :30	<b><u>PART 5 : ACTIVATION OF A PLATFORM IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY</u></b>  Two working groups: French-speaking country and English-speaking country  The objective of the session is to decide and define SOPs on how the affected country will inform donors on the measures to speed up the importation of aid.	Working document n° 4

### **DAY 3 : Wednesday 19 September**

09 :00 10 :30	Presentation of the results of both working groups on part 5. Discussions on implementation and Simulation exercises.	
10:30 11:00	Coffee break	
10:30 11:00	<b><u>PART 6 – NEXT STEPS</u></b>  Discussion on next project proposal and governance	Document n°5
12:30 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 15:30	Debriefing, evaluation form	Evaluation form
15 :30 16 :00	Coffee break	
16 :00 17 :30	Distribution of certificate of attendance and closing speeches	

Venue: Hotel Riviera Royal, BP 1708 Conakry. The hotel provides transfers.  
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Annex 3: working document 1

C-RED – FIRST STATE OF PLAY PER COUNTRY - SEPT 2018

	ACTIVITIES	GUINEA	LIBERIA	MALI	NIGERIA	SENEGAL	SIERRA LEONE
1	Baseline data collection	08/05/2016	25/07/2016	26/07/2016	01/08/2016	N/A	25/07/2016
2	Component 1 : Procurement and delivery of PPE	Arrangement signed : 29/06/18 Delivery : 04/08/18	arrangement signed : 9/06/18 Delivery: 15/08/18	N/A	N/A	N/A	Arrangemen t signed : 9/06/18 Delivery : 03/09/18
3	Component 2 : Analysis and assessment of the customs procedures regarding import of relief goods	1st mission : 17-20 July 2017	1st mission : 1-4 May 2018	1st mission : 18-21 September 2017	1st mission : 26-29 June 2017	N/A	1st mission : 30 October- 2 November 2017
4	WCO RKC Annex J-5	Not ratified	Not ratified	Ratified but annex not accepted	Ratified but annex not accepted	Ratified and annex accepted	Ratified but annex not accepted
5	WCO Istanbul Convention – Annex B9	Not ratified	Not ratified	October 2004 but Annex not accepted	June 1993 - accepted	Not ratified	Not ratified
6	Customs agreement between the Government and the United Nations	2014	2011	2009	No	No	No
	OCHA office	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (regional office)	No
7	Tampere Convention (telecommunication equipment)	2002	2005	1998	No	1998	No

8	ASYCUDA	ASYCUDA WORLD	ASYCUDA WORLD	ASYCUDA WORLD	Asycuda ++	ASYCUDA WORLD	Asycuda ++
4	Development of a guide of standard operating procedures	Finalisation 17/08/2018 National validation ?	Last version : August 2018	Finalisation : 24/05/18 National validation ?	Finalisation : 03/09/18 Validation ?	N/A	Last version : August 2018
5	Simulation Exercise	Airport Conakry: 12/09/18	N/A	Airport of Bamako : 05/07/18	Airport of Abuja : 12/07/18 Lagos Port: 08/08/2018	N/A	N/A
6	Training of trainers	13/09/18	N/A	03/07/18	11/07/18	N/A	N/A
7	National Platform IMPACCT	To create	?	?	Created beginning of 2018	?	?
8	Other future actions (to fill in with the focal points- according to their respective Action Plan)	1- validation of the "manual" (no deadline but under work) 2- to work from the recommendation list 3- OCHA platform 4- simulation exercise at the port 5- revision of the manual	1- Finalization of the SOP 2- to work on the action plan 3 - simulation exercise 4- platform 5- revision of SOPs	1- finalization of the "manual" 2- use of the smartphone app 3- platform 4- revision of the "manual" 5- to work from the action plan	1. Sensitization of relevant Agencies on the SOP. 2. Simulation on the Clearance processes on the SOP. 3 Dissemination of Adopted SOP. 4. Capacity building, Train the Trainer workshops. 5. Implementation of SOP. 6. Review of SOP after two years. 7- to work from the Action plan	1- Compilation of legal texts, 2- to simplify the procedures as much as possible for future crisis and to validate those simplifications 3- platform 4- revision of the SOPs 5- to work from the action plan 6- feedback on the video game	1- finalization of SOPs 2- validation of SOPs 3- to work from the action plan 4- platform 5- revision of the SOPs

**Annex 4: Working document 2**

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE AUTHORITIES DURING THE C-RED PROJECT

<p>1</p>	<p><u>Project Knowledge</u>          How did you get to know the Project?          How did your Administration welcome the Project?          Which issues did you face to mobilize your colleagues/partners?          Which competences/skills did you use to do so?          How did you mobilize the internal resources?          Which challenges did you face?          Which difficulties have you ever encountered in your work with other administrations?</p>	<p>The WCO invited the Customs Administrations to acknowledge their selection as beneficiaries of the Netherlands-funded C-RED Project. They were all invited to a first sub regional workshop in Freetown in 2016.          The project was thus carried out and known by the customs services of each country. Eventually, there was a great mobilization of the various services involved on this subject. All welcomed this initiative, which has sense in a context of permanent risk, and it was very favorably received because administrations did not have defined procedures previously or had not experimented or shared them.          This project is considered as very significant and important.          Other government agencies understand now that Customs is the focal point on this topic and that they must collaborate and associate as closely as possible with Customs. This acceptance, by the other administrations, was not obvious and it was necessary to explain many times why Customs was the pivotal point for clearance of relief goods.</p> <p>At the beginning of the project, the communication difficulties between the Customs and the other ministerial authorities were emphasized several times. For example, in Guinea, it took a year for one of the key partners to be involved in the work (SENAH).          But with the C-RED project, this has restored communication between Ministries of health and Customs etc.          The challenges are not fully solved yet. There was a low level of awareness and preparedness about the subject in most countries despite the post Ebola outbreak, but the project fulfilled its advocacy role beyond expectations.          Financing and logistics are major challenges; The state of infrastructure at entry points is not "terrific" and it is a major challenge.          The countries stated that they shall have further equipment and funding to speed up the delivery of relief shipments.          Another challenge: the divergence of views on the notion of relief goods. The use of the RKC</p>
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		<p>definition progressively leads to a common definition.</p> <p>Other difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of knowledge of other actors in the chain of procedures / handling of relief shipments, -</li> <li>- the political challenge of adopting guides or SOPs.</li> <li>- there is also a multitude of regulatory fees,</li> <li>- a lack of simplified procedures for the removal of relief shipments,</li> <li>- a lack of resource persons to receive packages and lack of proper logistics.</li> </ul> <p>Some add that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the validation deadlines of the Guide is a political challenges,</li> <li>- how to bring together the different actors is a challenge,</li> <li>- the follow-up of the conclusions, the dissemination and the appropriation of the files are not solved yet.</li> </ul> <p>Finally, some conflicts of competence in some countries, between Customs and other government departments such as Agencies for coordination in case of crisis.</p>
2	Which solutions have you brought to these challenges?	<p>Organize meetings; create synergy, for example, through quarterly meetings.</p> <p>Educate customs, hygiene service, veterinary service, commissionaires licensed in customs: all together to change behavior in depth.</p> <p>Continue to raise awareness of all actors involved in an emergency.</p> <p>The drafting of the guide with all the actors was a solution and a necessary step.</p>
3	<p>Which recommendations could you make to facilitate the Project Management in the Ministries of Health or in the Customs Authorities or in National Authorities managing Disaster relief?</p> <p>How to incorporate this common work into the working plan of your Administration?</p> <p>How to improve the coordination with the other Authorities of your country?</p>	<p>Customs-led coordination is recommended,</p> <p>Regular information points are highly recommended between agencies but also internally, in each department. For example, if a person represents his administration at a meeting, he must make sure to do a CR internally.</p> <p>Keeping established contacts and getting to know one another changes the situation.</p> <p>In order to ensure coordination, it is necessary to set up national project management platforms to ensure the sustainability of the project.</p> <p>Continue to hold meetings to be sure to keep time on this topic. Through the platform, regular meetings can be organized.</p> <p>Provide replacement persons when the focal point is not available + have fixed persons able to receive the relief goods.</p> <p>Continue mobilization internally via memos and meetings.</p>

		<p>Possibility of a central unit which coordinates and federates the actions of all the concerned administrations, by appointing focal points, setting up of substantial financial resources, at the disposal of the said cell to carry out the activities;</p> <p>Provide training of trainers that stimulate the appropriation of knowledge. It also helps to perpetuate the knowledge and to be certain that at the time of the emergency, certain agents have the necessary knowledge;</p> <p>It is recommended to mobilize budget on this topic for the future.</p> <p>It will be necessary for ECOWAS to take over because more countries must work on this subject and exchange with their neighbors.</p> <p>It is now up to the beneficiaries to share their experience and knowledge with their neighbors who have not been involved in the project.</p> <p>It is necessary to ensure appropriation of the RKC, the facilitation of exchanges and the dematerialization of the procedures, for example the access for all to the system of customs clearance and customs control.</p> <p>Simulation exercises are essential.</p> <p>Get commitments for the future, to perpetuate these meetings, which bring around the table the persons in charge of the file in the different countries.</p> <p>Continue the efforts; continue consultations and take into account the achieved capacity building.</p>
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**Testimony of Dr. Coulibaly (Mali)**

"An asset: people talk to each other, the subject is known and we have advanced on this subject.

Previously, in 30 years of service, I have never been to the Customs Department. The DGD convened a meeting of all stakeholders. All the health departments have been involved. Already putting us together to participate in a workshop where all the office managers (from border agencies) had to work with health and civil protection was extraordinary. Then the DG wished to capitalize on this experience by holding meetings and the elaboration of the guide was done. The train-the-trainer workshop was the most important activity, with the simulation exercise proving to be successful: the equipment was quickly removed from the place of simulation in the airport. If people know each other and I call Mali, they know who I am and the work I do. The project has broken the walls between our administrations and other sectors. This capital cannot be lost. "

Annex 5: working document 3 “outcome of the C-RED Project”

Enclosed to this report

## Annex 6: working document 4

### Project of CREATION OF NATIONAL PLATFORMS AND A REGIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLATFORM

#### 1. NATIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLATFORM

It is proposed to set up a national platform for the exchange of information for each of the C-RED beneficiary countries. This platform will allow the actors involved in the work that led to the drafting of the national operational plan to keep in touch in order to exchange on:

- suggestions for regulatory changes, as recommended by the workshops,
- changes that could be made to the standard operational plan,
- the challenges encountered during the implementation of the standardized operational plan,
- identification of potential solutions.

Regular phone meetings could be organized to discuss the above topics. This platform would be hosted by the C-RED focal point in collaboration with OCHA.

The list of participants in the platform will be updated regularly to ensure regular contact.

In addition to a regular exchange, the national platform can be activated in case of emergency / health crisis in order to immediately share the information necessary for a good coordination of emergency management.

Each platform will decide how it will work and can draw inspiration from the way other national platforms work, as part of the regional platform or exchanges within the community of practice (see below).

As of now, a first WhatsApp group has been created for Nigeria. This network is made up of humanitarian actors and the customs of Nigeria. Exchanges make it possible to report difficulties on a day-to-day basis and identify solutions.

## 2. REGIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLATFORM

Following the creation of national platforms described in point 1, a regional platform for information exchange will be created. It will be composed of C-RED focal points to discuss the issues encountered since the drafting of the operational plan. It can be complemented by the participation of actors such as the WCO or OCHA, depending on the terms of reference of the platform.

New ideas may emerge from these discussions.

In the event of a health crisis that may have an impact on neighboring countries, the regional platform may be activated in order to exchange, without delay, crucial information on the measures taken at border posts.



## 3. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The creation of a computer platform led by the humanitarian and customs sector actors is proving today to be a strategic tool to develop and share the knowledge of the subject, to innovate and to encourage dialogue between the actors.

The objective of this platform is to maximize dialogue between all government organizations and humanitarian actors involved in the import of relief goods, before, during and after international relief and recovery operations.

Concretely, this community of practice is materialized by the creation of an online platform allowing both the exchange of information relating to the import of humanitarian aid in case of emergency, the sharing of experiences, good practices, documents and contacts between actors in the humanitarian and customs sector.

Through forums, members of the community of practice are encouraged to share their expertise to jointly identify solutions to barriers encountered in their professional practice.

In order to coordinate and improve the activities of those involved in importing humanitarian aid, members of the community of practice are also encouraged to share "good" practices and innovations related to facilitation and import of humanitarian aid.

The community of practice is aimed at all stakeholders interested and / or involved in importing and clearing international humanitarian aid, namely:

- staff of federal agencies and other humanitarian organizations;
- staff of the UN agencies providing assistance;
- staff of assisting intergovernmental organizations;
- staff of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) partners in relief and initial recovery operations;
- members of civil society, former aid workers, academics and students wishing to share their experience and the results of their research.

In order to collectively develop strategies to speed up the procedures for importing aid into disaster-affected countries, this community of practice will open discussions and gather information around the following five topics:

1. the international and national legal instruments applicable in the case of relief operations and related to the importation of relief goods, health products (drugs, medical and laboratory equipment and consumables) and telecommunications;
2. information, projects, strategies and successes around the world;
3. a forum dedicated to the exchange of information in times of crisis;
4. conclusions regarding simulation exercises at ports of entry and airports;
5. Information on the countries likely to set up the Automated System for Relief Consignments (ASYREC) once its development is complete.

## **Annex 7: Recommendations**

### To the Donor, Government of the Netherlands:

- The Trade Facilitation Program launched by the donor, the Netherlands, in close collaboration with ECOWAS should include a component to continue the C-RED+ project in all ECOWAS member states at risk and showing a keen interest in the subject.

### To the Secretariat of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and UN-OCHA:

- To support the vice-presidency of the region (AOC) in the search for funding from donors sensitized in the importance of facilitating relief operations in the event of emergency. This support will be provided, inter alia, at the donor conference;
- To write an argument highlighting (the achievements and results obtained) and the regional scope of the project (the final report of the C-RED project has the same objective - an introduction summary can be used as a shorter argument);
- To write a rationale (on the basis of the final project evaluation) to arouse the interest of the project and obtain a commitment from the ECOWAS Commission to appropriate the project on the relief goods (same comment that previous point);
- To conduct a financial evaluation of the extension of the project to other ECOWAS Member States to facilitate decision-making and search for funding by the ECOWAS Commission), Evaluate the cost of the C-RED project (this evaluation has partly done and provided in the Netherlands - it can be sent to ECOWAS);
- To support countries to ratify international conventions (Observation Hanounou: this recommendation is addressed to the States because it is to encourage them to ratify the conventions).

### To the focal points of the countries:

- To develop and implement a PON / SOP training plan with recommended simulation exercise;
- To organize periodic meetings of the working group of national officials appointed for this purpose;
- To create and maintain an exchange platform between all stakeholders with the World Customs Organization and especially UN-OCHA;
- To disseminate SOP/ SOP to all stakeholders involved in importing emergency relief goods;
- To continue the PON/SOP validation procedure in the following months;
- To edit the guide and put on a cover page (this is at the discretion of different countries), the coat of arms of the country, the logos of the C-RED project, WCO and the Netherlands,
- To revise the guide periodically according to the evolution of local, regional and international technologies and legislation,
- To organize simulation exercises periodically,

- To do a comparative study on the time taken to hand over humanitarian relief goods before and during the application of the procedures.

To ECOWAS:

- To create a regional compilation based on the C-RED countries' PON / SOP and illustrate on its cover the logos of ECOWAS, the Netherlands, OCHA, OMD, C-RED Project and at the bottom of the page the flags of six countries affected (Hanounou: if it is a regional guide, we can stick to these countries and the ECOWAS logo only);

- To fund or seek funding from donors for the continuation of the project, in particular support the integration of a future extended project with other ECOWAS member countries into the Dutch Trade Facilitation Project;

- To organize regional seminars for the extension of the guide.

The Workshop

The 19/09/2018