



Brussels, 18 September 2019

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE (ECP)

- Aligning Action Plan for Phase IV with the new WCO Strategic Plan -

(Item XIV.a on the Agenda)

I. Background

1. The Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP) was launched in 2012 to support trade facilitation at the global, regional and national levels. The ECP was designed primarily to support the first pillar of the WCO Strategic Plan (Promote the security and facilitation of international trade, including simplification and harmonization of Customs procedures). It is comprised of existing WCO tools and instruments, which contribute to the enhancement of economic competitiveness by promoting trade facilitation while ensuring the security of global supply chains. The principles laid down in the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) are recognized as the core elements of the ECP.
2. In addition, the ECP may provide practical implementation guidance for issues related to Customs for the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA). In this regard, the scope of the ECP includes the TFA, and the ECP and the Mercator Programme reinforce each other.
3. The ECP also enables Members to promote regional integration. Referring to global standards defined by the RKC and other ECP tools and instruments, Customs administrations may harmonize various regulations and procedures in their regional or bilateral frameworks.
4. The WCO has been developing new tools and instruments and has been delivering capacity building projects in accordance with the ECP Action Plans. The first ECP Action Plan was endorsed at the Policy Commission in December 2012. The second ECP Action plan was adopted at the Policy Commission in December 2014. The ECP Action Plan for Phase III from January 2017 to December 2018 was endorsed at the Policy Commission at its 76th Session in December 2016.
5. The Policy Commission at its 80th Session in December 2018 adopted the ECP Action Plan for Phase IV running from January 2019 to December 2020 which was in line with the WCO Strategic Plan.

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6. The Policy Commission document [SP0653](#) provides background information on the ECP since its launch in 2012. In addition, the main achievements under the first three phases of the ECP were provided in that document too. The Annex to document SP0653 presents the ECP Action Plan for Phase IV 2019/2020.
7. Since the WCO Council in its June 2019 session endorsed the new WCO Strategic Plan for 2019/2022, the ECP Action Plan for Phase IV needs to be revised.
8. The draft Revised Action Plan for Phase IV of the ECP, after approval by the PTC, would then be submitted to the next Policy Commission in December 2019 for endorsement.

II. ECP Action Plan and other work programmes/plans of the WCO

WCO Strategic Plan

9. The WCO Council adopted the three-year WCO Strategic Plan for the financial years 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. The WCO Strategic Plan is a comprehensive and high-level policy instrument, which directs the programmes, projects and other initiatives implemented by the WCO Secretariat. The Strategic Plan was prepared using a multi-step process, including consultations with Members, Regions and all the key governance bodies of the WCO.
 10. The Annex to the Strategic Plan contains the annual Implementation Plan for 2019/2020 which will enable the WCO to keep the right focus on the main goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, and to get an overall idea of its capacity to respond to and deliver Members' expectations.
 11. One of the sections of the Implementation Plan 2019/2020 is the Implementation of the WCO's Main Packages which presents the main activities that will be undertaken during the financial year 2019/2020 for each of the WCO's main Packages. The Strategic Map ECP broadly outline the main priority activities for the financial year 2019/2020, and should be considered with reference to ECP Action Plan, which list in detail the specific activities that will be undertaken throughout the year.
 12. The first Strategic Process of the WCO Strategic Plan is defined as "**SP1 - Economic Competitiveness Package**".
 13. In addition, the ECP may contribute to the Strategic Process 6 "**SP6 - Sharing of knowledge and best practices**".
 14. Moreover, the ECP may also contribute to the Strategic Process 7 "**SP7 - Technical assistance and capacity building for implementation of international standards**".
 15. On the other hand, the ECP may also contribute to the Learning and Development objectives aimed at supporting all the WCO processes such as "**LD2 - Use of technology and data**" and "**LD3- Raise profile of WCO and promote Customs' role**".
 16. The Revised ECP Action Plan for phase IV sets out concrete actions for those Strategic Processes and Learning and Development objectives. In this sense, the ECP
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Action Plan complements the Strategic Plan's Implementation Plan and ECP Strategic Map that presents the following main priority activities for 2019/2020;

- (1). Comprehensive review of the RKC
- (2). Framework of Standards for Cross-border E-Commerce
- (3). SAFE Review 2021
- (4). TFA implementation and manage the pool of Mercator Programme advisors
- (5). Capacity building and technical workshops to support the implementation of the ECP tools
- (6). Coordinated Border Management
- (7). Support establishment and management of NCTFs
- (8). Standardization of required data and modern tools for data exchange

WCO working bodies and the ECP Action Plan

17. Since the ECP covers a wide range of issues, it is relevant not only to the PTC but also to other WCO Committees and Working Groups. The following are the main WCO working bodies to which the ECP Action Plan is relevant:

- (1) Permanent Technical Committee;
- (2) Revised Kyoto Convention Management Committee;
- (3) Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the RKC;
- (4) TFA Working Group;
- (5) SAFE Working Group;
- (6) Information Management Sub-Committee;
- (7) Working Group on e-Commerce;
- (8) Administrative Committee on the Istanbul Convention and the ATA Convention
- (9) Technical Experts Group on Air Cargo Security (TEGACS)

III. New Actions for Phase IV

18. The draft Revised ECP Action Plan for Phase IV is appended as an Annex to this document. It includes 63 ECP-related actions outlined under the three WCO Strategic Processes and the two Learning and Development objectives. Namely, 44 actions of the current Action Plan were maintained for this Revised Plan, in a few of which only the timeframe/deadlines were adapted. The Revised Action Plan also includes 19 additional actions to align it with the new WCO Strategic Plan 2019/2022 and also further enhance the economic competitiveness of the WCO Members.
19. The main achievements under the first three phases of the ECP were provided in the Policy Commission document SP0653. As done in the past, the Secretariat will update the PTC on the progress made with the implementation of the Revised ECP Action Plan for Phase IV at the end of the Phase IV, depending on the decision that will be taken on the timeframe of the Action Plans, either at its April 2020 or autumn 2020 sessions.

IV. Timeframe of the Action Plans

20. The ECP Action Plans for Phases I to IV had been drafted and endorsed for two calendar year periods. On that basis, the current ECP Action Plan for Phase IV also covers a two calendar years period from January 2019 to December 2020.

21. In parallel to the other plans and work programmes of the WCO, the option to endorse the future ECP Action Plans on a financial year basis instead of calendar year basis could be considered by the PTC. In the meantime, since the ECP was launched to support the WCO Strategic Plan, the alignment of the timeframe of the ECP Action Plans with that of the Strategic Plan should also be considered to better respond the requirements of the Strategic Plan and annual Implementation Plans. To this end, the timeframe of the draft Revised ECP Action Plan for Phase IV is revised for the period from January 2019 to June 2020.
22. Members are invited to discuss and provide guidance on the timeframe of the ECP Action Plans. The following options can be taken into consideration:
- Continue to endorse Action Plans for two calendar years;
 - Endorse the Revised Action Plan for Phase IV January 2019 - June 2020. Then the Action Plan for Phase V for two financial years 2020/2021 – 2021/2022 would be drafted and presented to the next PTC for endorsement.

V. Action Required

23. The PTC is invited to;
- discuss and approve the timeframe for Phase IV and for the following Phases of the ECP Action Plan; and
 - discuss and approve, as appropriate the draft Revised ECP Action Plan for Phase IV that will be submitted to the Policy Commission in December 2019.

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DRAFT REVISED ECP ACTION PLAN FOR PHASE IV

(January 2019 to June 2020)

1. Economic Competitiveness Package

The WCO will develop and update instruments and tools to unlock the significant potential of modernizing Customs procedures through the implementation of IT solutions, moving towards efficient Customs procedures as those that promote the facilitation of legitimate trade through an effective risk management strategy. These tools form part of the Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP).

Bearing in mind the ever-changing trade and business environment, regular updates to existing WCO tools and instruments, as well as the development of new tools are to be expected. In order to develop practical and useful instruments and tools for Members, examples of innovative practice will be collected from Members and shared on a continuous basis.

The key priorities of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 include, among others, the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), E-Commerce and Coordinated Border Management.

The WCO Committees and Working Groups regularly review existing WCO tools and instruments on trade facilitation and security. For instance, based on the decision taken by the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) Management Committee, the Policy Commission/Council at their June 2018 sessions established a Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the RKC to conduct a comprehensive review of the RKC.

The Working Group on E-Commerce has developed the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce and updated the Immediate Release Guidelines and these were adopted by the Policy Commission and Council in June 2018. Going forward the Framework of Standards (FoS) has been further enriched with an E-Commerce Package, adopted by the Policy Commission and Council in June 2019. The E-Commerce Package includes the technical specifications, definitions, flow charts and data elements, business models, implementation strategy, action plan and capacity building mechanism, and case studies that will facilitate expeditious, effective and harmonized implementation of the Framework, thus further supporting the implementation of relevant TFA measures in the e-commerce context, as well as the ongoing work on the WTO's Work Programme on E-Commerce. Further work on the outstanding items such as data elements and revenue collection approaches will continue. Furthermore, it is envisaged to develop a compendium of case studies on E-Commerce based on implementation experiences of WCO Members and E-Commerce stakeholders. A mechanism to maintain the E-Commerce FoS and associated tools is also being defined to keep WCO E-Commerce agenda agile, taking into consideration the dynamically emerging E-Commerce environment.

The WCO has already developed several tools in the area of Coordinated Border management as well, such as the CBM Compendium, the Single Window Compendium and Guidance on National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTF). The SAFE Framework of Standards was revised to include Customs-to-other-Government-Agencies cooperation as its third pillar in 2015, which has been further enhanced in the 2018 edition of the SAFE Framework.

In addition to the regular activities undertaken by the WCO working bodies, the ECP Action Plan for Phase IV envisages further discussions on developing or refining certain WCO tools and instruments with a view to enhancing the economic competitiveness of WCO Members.

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
1	Small Island Economies (SIEs) : Study of Customs procedures and practices, peculiarities/challenges and develop a Guidance for Customs administrations in SIEs that may include potential recommendations/ solutions	WCO Secretariat, Permanent Technical Committee	Draft PTC Work Programme 2019-2022	June 2020
2	Conduct a comprehensive review of the RKC	Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the RKC, RKC/MC	WGRKC Work Plan	June 2021
3	Review of the SAFE FoS	SAFE WG		June 2021
4	Consider new Guidance on Regional Integration	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	PTC Work Programme	June 2020
5	Discuss the development of Guidance on Special Customs Zones	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	PTC Work Programme	December 2019
6	Develop new WCO tools and instruments on trade security and facilitation (e.g., e-commerce, Digital Customs, AEO, mutual recognition), based on Members' needs	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	PTC Work Programme, TFA WG Work Programme	Continuous activity
7	Develop Guidance on Customs' role in the collection of indirect taxes on imported goods	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	Draft PTC Work Programme 2019-2022	June 2020
8	Guidelines on the alignment of the WCO's AEO and ICAO's Regulated Agent/Known Consignor programmes	WCO Secretariat, SAFE Working Group and TEGACS	PTC Work Programme	June 2020
9	Guiding principles for Pre-loading Advance Cargo Information (PLACI)	WCO Secretariat, SAFE Working Group and TEGACS	PTC Work Programme	June 2020

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
10	Mercury Pilot Project for the e-ATA Carnet	WCO Secretariat, International Chamber of Commerce World Chambers Federation (ICC WCF)	Cooperative work among WCO, ICC WCF, and volunteering members of WCO	June 2020
11	Study Report on Smart Security Devices	WCO Secretariat, SAFE WG	Draft PTC Work Programme 2019-2022	June 2021
12	Discuss the development of Guidance on Railways	WCO Secretariat, PTC, API/PNR-related WCO body	PTC Work Programme	June 2020
13	Support the establishment or management of One Stop Border Control	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
14	Promote the implementation of a Single Window paperless environment and interoperability	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, PTC	PTC Work Programme, Work Programme on Digital Customs	Continuous activity
15	Continue enriching the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce and developing associated technical guidance and case studies	Working Group on E-Commerce PTC	PTC Work Programme	June 2020
16	Joint WCO-UPU Guidelines on data capture and compliance with CN22/CN23 postal forms	WCO-UPU Contact Committee PTC	WCO-UPU Contact Committee Work Programme	June 2020
17	Refine and update existing WCO tools and instruments on trade security and facilitation based on Members' needs	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	PTC Work Programme, TFA WG Work Programme	Continuous activity

2. Sharing of knowledge and best practices

The WCO fosters knowledge exchange and the sharing of policies and best practices through the organization of missions, international and regional events and the promotion of Customs-to-Customs meetings, workshops and forums.

The WCO established the TFA Working Group, inviting Member Customs administrations, trade ministry representatives, international organizations relevant to border management, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders to participate. It has examined each article of the TFA

and developed new tools for the uniform implementation of the TFA provisions, drawing on existing WCO instruments, tools and examples of best practice from Members. The TFA Working Group has discussed how its own work programme can support the effective implementation of the WTO TFA provisions.

The WCO has developed a Customs-Business Partnership Guidance document to assist Members with putting in place processes for regular consultation and establishing a robust partnership with business. The ECP Action Plan for Phase IV will require the private sector to be more involved in the WCO Committees and Working Groups and the survey on private sector stakeholders in supply chain management in order to allow us to better understand their roles and expectations.

The ECP Action Plan for Phase IV highlights the main points of action, but leaves concrete and detailed actions to the TFA Working Group and other relevant Committees.

The PTC will review the progress of the ECP Action Plan.

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
18	Collect, analyse and share examples of innovative practice	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
19	Compile a Compendium of best practices in the area of transit	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	PTC Work Programme, TFA WG Work Programme	June 2020
20	Fifth WCO Global Conference on AEO	WCO Secretariat, SAFE Working Group		March 2020
21	2020 WCO Technology Conference	WCO Secretariat		June 2020
22	Update and implement the TFA Working Group Work Programme	WCO Secretariat, TFA WG	TFA WG Work Programme, TFA WG Annual Work Plan	Continuous activity
23	Regional ICAO-WCO joint training workshops on air cargo security and facilitation	WCO Secretariat, SAFE WG TEGACS	PTC Work Programme	June 2020
24	Joint ICAO-WCO Conference on air cargo security and facilitation	WCO Secretariat, SAFE WG TEGACS	PTC Work Programme	June 2020
25	Involve the private sector in relevant WCO committees, working groups, seminars and workshops	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups		Continuous activity
26	Develop a study report on the roles and expectations of various private sector	WCO Secretariat, SAFE WG		June 2020

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
	stakeholders in supply chain management			
27	Publish useful awareness-raising material	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
28	Report regularly to the PTC	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
29	Update of the AEO Compendium	WCO Secretariat SAFE WG		Annual
30	Compendium of E-Commerce case studies	WCO Secretariat PTC		June 2020
31	Online repository of case studies on the Single Window environment	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
32	Update the Study Report on Disruptive Technologies with new case studies	PTC Virtual Working Group on the Future of Customs		June 2020
33	Regional Experience-Sharing Workshops on Disruptive Technologies	WCO Secretariat PTC		June 2020

3. Technical assistance, training and tools for implementation of international standards

The WCO will provide Tools and Capacity Building to Members in accordance with their expressed needs, and/or needs identified through performance measurement tools. The WCO will assist Members in implementing the tools and instruments developed for the ECP, RP, CEP and ODP.

In June 2014, the WCO launched the Mercator Programme to ensure the uniform implementation of the WTO TFA, using WCO instruments and tools, as most of the TFA provisions are related to Customs.

The WCO may offer comprehensive tailor-made operational and technical support to implement ECP tools and instruments, based on WCO Members' needs.

Under the ECP Action Plan for Phase IV, the WCO will strengthen its supporting activities for NCTF, E-Commerce, SAFE Framework, AEO programmes and Mutual Recognition Arrangements/Agreements (MRAs), Single Window, One Stop Border Control and interconnectivity/interoperability of IT systems as they are the main components of CBM.

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
34	Accredit more Mercator Programme Advisors (if required) and Technical and Operational Advisors in the areas addressed by the TFA	WCO Secretariat, TFA WG, other relevant committees or working groups	TFA WG Work Programme, TFA WG Annual Work Plan	Continuous activity
35	Deliver tailor-made capacity building projects for TFA implementation	WCO Secretariat, TFA WG, other relevant committees or working groups	TFA WG Work Programme, TFA WG Annual Work Plan	Continuous activity
36	Support the establishment or management of National Committees on Trade Facilitation	WCO Secretariat, WCO TFA WG	TFA WG Work Programme and TFA WG Annual Work Plan	Continuous activity
37	Provide capacity building support to Members with the implementation of the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce in a harmonized and effective manner, in terms of the June 2018 Council Resolution on the Framework	Working Group on E-Commerce PTC Capacity Building Committee		Continuous activity
38	Provide capacity building support to Members with the implementation of the SAFE Framework of Standards, AEO programmes and MRAs and accredit more Technical and Operational Advisors in this areas	SAFE WG Capacity Building Committee		Continuous activity
39	To support and enhance Members exchange of information capabilities within the Globally Networked Customs	IMSC, PTC		Continuous activity
40	Capacity building activities to harmonize regulatory requirements and comply with WCO DM	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
41	To support Members for the implementation of Single Window Systems	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
42	Capacity building to support the implementation of the WCO's existing instruments and tools	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity

4. Use of technology and data

The WCO will consider, in all its activities, the use of technologies, and will continue to update Members on the latest developments in IT solutions for Customs procedures and objectives. The effective use of data, and the related methodologies for processing and analysing it, is a core task for Digital Customs.

The Digital Customs Concept intends to provide a thematic overview of existing WCO tools and instruments. Its aim is to serve as a conceptual framework to support Member administrations in understanding and implementing the ICT-related tools, instruments and guidelines that have already been developed by the WCO. At the Policy Commission in July 2016 a two-year WCO Work Plan on Digital Customs for 2016-2018 was endorsed as a living document. After two years of focused work in the area of Digital Customs, it is an opportune time to take stock of the situation and take forward the topic of Digital Customs, leveraging new opportunities.

The ECP Action Plan for Phase IV highlights the main actions concerning Digital Customs.

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
43	Study Report on Disruptive Technologies	WCO Secretariat, PTC, Virtual Working Group on the Future of Customs	PTC Work Programme	June 2019
44	Develop Guidelines on interoperability/interconnectivity of IT systems/Single Windows	WCO Secretariat, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	PTC Work Programme, TFA WG Work Programme	June 2020
45	Provide a framework to consolidate the development, promotion and deployment of the WCO's Information Technology (IT)-related standards, instruments, tools, guidelines and systems	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, SAFE WG, other related WCO committees or working groups	WCO Digital Customs Agenda	Continuous activity
46	Development of a Handbook on Information Security	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, other related WCO committees or working groups		June 2020
47	Promote the implementation of Globally Networked Customs (GNC) Develop new Utility Blocks considering as well the application of new technologies for information exchange including blockchain and cloud computing	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, PTC, other related WCO committees or working groups	WCO Digital Customs Agenda	June 2020

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
48	Upgrade the WCO Single Window Interactive Map (SWIM) and the WCO Reform and Modernization – Monitoring Activities and Projects (RAM-MAP) platform	WCO Secretariat		January 2020
49	Use IT to support Coordinated Border Management	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, other related WCO committees or working groups	WCO Digital Customs Agenda	Continuous activity
50	Revision of the technical and non-technical Guidelines of the WCO Data Model	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, other related WCO committees or working groups	WCO Digital Customs Agenda	Continuous activity
51	Enhancement of electronic services (including Cloud computing solutions) in Customs and border processes: development of a handbook on electronic services	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, other related WCO committees or working groups		June 2020
52	Update of the RKC ICT Guidelines	IMSC RKCMC		June 2021
53	Exploration of new and emerging technologies (e.g. Blockchain) in the Customs environment, and related work in terms of standardization, interoperability and data quality : Development of a comprehensive concept paper on blockchain :Policy and technical perspectives	WCO Secretariat, IMSC, other related WCO committees or working groups		June 2020
54	Examination of the use of Product Identification Systems in Customs and other regulatory processes	PTC, IMSC		June 2020
55	Update the WCO TRS Software	PTC, IMSC		Continuous activity
56	Standardization of required data and modern tools for data exchange	PTC, IMSC, DMPT		Continuous activity

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
57	Explore the possibility for releasing a new major version (version 4.0.0) of the WCO Data Model	DMPT, IMSC		June 2020
58	Research paper/Develop Guidelines on SW automation processes, audit policies and mechanism, and their impact on integrity aspects.	WCO Secretariat		September 2020

5. Raise profile of WCO and promote Customs' role

Through the update and implementation of an effective Communication Strategy and engagement with other strategic stakeholders, the WCO will promote its tools and instruments, as well as its main results, and will increase awareness of the importance of Customs' role in trade, security and global economic development.

The WCO has already developed a range of instruments and tools relevant to the growth of economic competitiveness, and the ECP lists these. Raising the awareness of existing and newly developed WCO tools and activities contributes to enhancing the economic competitiveness of WCO Members.

The WCO undertakes a range of promotion activities in order to disseminate its instruments and tools. As a means to promote the importance of Customs to national economic competitiveness, the WCO uses multiple platforms to communicate information about its activities and tools to its stakeholders.

Raising the profile of Customs and promoting their role at the border requires raising awareness of external stakeholders on these matters.

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
59	Enhance cooperation with the World Trade Organization	WCO Secretariat, TFA WG	TFA WG Work Programme, TFA WG Annual Work Plan	Continuous activity
60	Enhance cooperation with other international organizations	WCO Secretariat Relevant Working Bodies		Continuous activity
61	Enhance cooperation with the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG)	WCO Secretariat, SAFE WG		Continuous activity

	Action	Responsible body	Relevant Work Programme/ Action Plan	Timeframe
62	Ensure effective use of the WCO Web site to promote existing WCO tools and instruments	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
63	Enhance WCO attendance to events or conferences organized by other international organizations or by the private sector	WCO Secretariat		Continuous activity
