



PERMANENT TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE

PC0695Ea

(HYBRID MEETING)

235<sup>th</sup>/236<sup>th</sup> Sessions  
25-29 April 2022

Brussels, 7 March 2022.

**ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE (ECP) ACTION PLAN AND PTC WORK  
PROGRAMME (WP)**

**- Progress reports and draft WP 2022-2025 -**

**(Item XIII. on the Agenda)**

**SUMMARY**

**Purpose of document**

Implementation of the Revised Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP) Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022), as well as implementation of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) Work Programme 2019-2022 are both ending in June 2022. Progress reports are therefore being provided to the PTC accordingly.

Furthermore, a new draft PTC Work Programme 2022-2025, that will, in line with the guidance provided by the Policy Commission (PC) in December 2021, also replace a future ECP Action Plan, is being submitted to the PTC for discussion and endorsement.

**Action required of the PTC**

The PTC is invited to:

- take note of the progress reports on the implementation of the ECP Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022) and of the PTC Work Programme 2019-2022; and
- discuss and tentatively endorse the PTC Work Programme 2022-2025, to be further finalized after the approval of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025, as required.

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The facilitation activities of the WCO are planned and monitored through a number of different mechanisms, including through the ECP Action Plans and PTC Work Programmes.
2. The ECP has been implemented through a series of Action Plans (APs). The latest, Revised Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022), is coming to a close at the end of the current financial year, in June 2022. On the other hand, the PTC works in line with a three-year Work Programme (WP), which is directly linked to the WCO Strategic Plan (SP) and supports implementation of its goals and objectives. The current PTC WP 2019-2022 is also coming to a close at the end of the current financial year.
3. The ECP AP and the PTC WP, although differently structured and with different objectives in mind, to a large extent reflect the same activities. However, the ECP AP focuses more on the work of the Facilitation Sub-Directorate, in particular, while the PTC WP focuses on the work of the Committee itself.
4. The December 2021 PC discussed the way forward for the planning and monitoring of the activities of the Directorates and working bodies. It reflected on the proposal related to the replacement of the Packages' Action Plans with work programmes to be used by each WCO working body and endorsed the proposed template for the work programmes.
5. In advance of the close of the Revised ECP AP for Phase V (2020-2022) and of the PTC WP 2019-2022, relevant progress reports are being submitted to PTC for consideration. Furthermore, the PTC will discuss and be invited to tentatively endorse the draft PTC WP 2022-2025, based on the template proposed by the PC and also in line with the draft SP 2022-2025 and Implementation Plan (IP) 2022-2023. The PTC WP 2022-2025 will be further finalized after the approval of the SP, as required.

## **II. Progress in implementing the ECP Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022)**

6. The ECP Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022) was endorsed by the Policy Commission in December 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted cross-border trade and supply chains, which called for a collaborative approach for Customs in mitigating these effects. As the focus and priorities of Customs had shifted during the pandemic, a need had emerged for the WCO to prioritize its work and activities to support and respond to the needs of its Membership during this challenging period. Therefore, the Revised ECP Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022) (Annex I to this document) was endorsed by the Policy Commission in June 2021.
7. The document in Annex I on progress made with the implementation of the Revised ECP Action Plan for Phase V, in its 'updates' column provides the information on each of the actions including continuous activities. Most of the actions with specific timeframes have been completed on time. There was also progress in all continuous activities. On the other hand, some of the actions have been delayed either due to the COVID-19 conditions or because additional work and discussion was required. These actions are included either in the draft PTC WP 2022-2025 or in the SAFE Working Group work programme.

8. The PTC is invited to discuss and take note of the progress made on the Revised ECP AP for Phase V (2020-2022).

### **III. Progress in implementing the PTC Work Programme 2019-2022**

9. The PTC WP 2019-2022 (Annex II to this document) was endorsed by the PTC in October 2019. Half-way through its implementation, at its meeting in May 2021, the PTC carried out a mid-term review, based on suggestions for changes and progress made. The review also took into consideration the prioritization exercise of WCO's overall work required during the COVID-19 pandemic, as instructed by the Policy Commission and Council in December 2020.
10. The PTC WP 2019-2022 in its last column contains information on the progress achieved under the respective topics and tasks. The information provided shows that most of the tasks have been successfully completed. However, due to the lack of interest, some have been either placed under inactive topics (product identification, Customs-tax cooperation, inward and outward processing), while others spilled over to the period ahead and found their place in the draft PTC WP 2022-2025.
11. The PTC is invited to examine the progress achieved under the PTC WP 2019-2022.

### **IV. Draft PTC Work Programme 2022-2025**

#### *Structure and links to the draft WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and Implementation Plan 2022-2023*

12. The draft PTC Work Programme 2022-2025 (Annex III to this document) uses the template for the work programmes endorsed by the PC in December 2021. It is divided into two parts:
  - I. Activities undertaken within a specific timeframe; and
  - II. Activities undertaken continuously.
13. There are ten columns: Number (No.); Link to the Strategic Plan; Activities; WCO Strategic Plan; Type of task associated; Responsible body; Team resources; Key Performance Indicators; Timeline; and, Progress. The columns include descriptions of the information required to be provided.
14. The new template is, to a large extent, in line with the current PTC WP template. The new elements reflected in the draft PTC WP 2022-2025 are the following:
  - What are titled as 'Tasks' in the current WP, are now the 'Activities' in the draft WP 2022-2025. The activities are not placed under 'Topics', but are standalone activities.
  - In addition to the already existing column on the links to the WCO SP, another has been introduced to indicate whether there is a direct link with the main areas in the SP, or not.
  - A new column on 'Team resources' was added to reflect the Secretariat staff involved in the conduct of the respective activities.
15. The PTC WP was drafted in line with the draft WCO SP 2022-2025, which was submitted to the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Audit Committee held in February 2022 (document SA0160). The SP has four strategic objectives (SOs): SO1. Trade Facilitation; SO2. Revenue

collection; SO3. Protection of society; and SO4. Organizational development. The work of the PTC falls mainly under SO1.

16. The SP shows the core functions of the WCO as strategic processes (SPs), namely the development of standards, the reinforcement of cooperation, and capacity building, backed by its supporting functions of research and communication in the Customs areas.
17. To complement this approach, the SP also calls for a limited number of focus areas (FAs), to ensure that the Secretariat concentrates appropriate efforts on those areas where awareness needs to be raised, expertise developed and experience expanded. Given the dynamic structure of the SP and the current global uncertainty, it is assumed that these areas of focus should be reviewed every year, and consequently reflected in the PTC WP during the mid-term review. The focus areas for the IP 2022/2023, as proposed to the Audit Committee in February 2022, are Technology and innovation, Green Customs and Performance Measurement. However, discussions on focus are ongoing and subject to review before submission to the Policy Commission and Council in June 2022.
18. In addition, the SP refers to the organizational capacity (ORGs), which mainly relates to the mitigation of the risks surrounding the organization and the new working methods.
19. The SOs, SPs, FAs and ORGs are listed below and have been reflected in the draft WP accordingly:
  - Strategic objectives (SOs): SO1. Trade Facilitation; SO2. Revenue collection; SO3. Protection of society; and SO4. Organizational development;
  - Strategic processes (SPs): SP1 - Develop, maintain and implement instruments; SP2 - Foster Customs cooperation; SP3 - Build capacity; SP4 - Research; SP5 – Communicate;
  - Focus Areas (FAs): FA1 – Technology and innovation 1; FA2 – Green Customs; FA3 – Performance measurement;
  - Organizational Capacity (ORGs): ORG1 – WCO Modernization; ORG2 - Funding policy.

### Part I

20. Part I (activities undertaken within a specific timeframe) includes a number of activities carried over from the current ECP AP and PTC WP, which will not be completed by end of June 2022. Those are, for example, the new Time Release Study (TRS) Online System, the dataset Annex to the Railway Guidance and the update of the ICT Guidelines. It also includes new proposed activities in a number of ongoing areas such as single window, railway cooperation, Customs-port cooperation and others.
21. It also includes new activities proposed in line with the priorities determined by WCO's draft IP 2022/2023, to be approved by the PC and Council in June 2022. Those are activities related to data analytics and data strategy, circular economy and waste, and others.
22. Moreover the relevant activities of the working bodies which have been closed during the course of the current PTC WP, namely the Information Management Sub-Committee (IMSC), the Trade Facilitation Agreement Working Group (TFAWG) and the Working Group on E-Commerce (WGEC), have also been reflected in the draft WP.

### Part II

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23. Part II (activities undertaken continuously) includes a large number of continuous activities from the current WP (Part II), such as taking note of ongoing capacity building in the relevant areas including the Mercator Programme, sharing of innovative practices, discussing emerging topics including through the environmental scan, and many others.
24. Part II also includes the reports from working bodies that either inform, request guidance or endorsement of tools and reports from the PTC. In addition, these bodies will also be expected to provide their work programmes for notetaking/guidance/endorsement by the PTC, which has also been reflected in Part II activities. The respective work programmes could potentially be annexed to the PTC WP in the future, once available.
25. Lastly, the WP at the end includes a list of 'Inactive topics', which serve as a reminder of those topics that were part of the PTC WP in the past, but have, due to lack of traction and interest from Members, been put on hold for the time being.

#### **V. Action required from the PTC**

26. The PTC is invited to:
  - take note of the progress reports of the ECP Action Plan for Phase V (2020-2022) and the PTC Work Programme 2019-2022; and
  - discuss and tentatively endorse the PTC Work Programme 2022-2025, to be further finalized after the approval of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025, as required.

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