



Brussels, 18 August 2022.

WCO DATA STRATEGY

**Role of the WCO Data Model in the harmonization of statistical data
(Item X on the Agenda)**

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

In June 2022, the WCO Council adopted the WCO Data Strategy, recognizing the power of data for strategic planning and intelligence. The WCO Data Strategy gives emphasis to the fact that statistics are a foundational layer of the transition to a data-driven organization and are essential for evidence-based policymaking. The WCO aims to support and stimulate the production of statistics by Members, as well as the standardization and global dissemination of statistics.

Action required of the Permanent Technical Committee

The Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) is invited to:

- take note of and provide guidance on the role of the WCO Data Model as the basis for harmonized metrics of statistics on Customs transactional data.

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I. Background

1. At the 235th/236th Sessions of the PTC in April 2022, the WCO Secretary General presented the WCO Data Strategy. The Strategy is aimed at ensuring the clarity and consistency of WCO data initiatives, encompassing the full range of data matters and data use in the Customs domain, responding to Members' requests in terms of capacity building and dissemination of knowledge, and stimulating innovation in partnership with academia and the private sector.

2. The PTC expressed its support for the Strategy and submitted comments that have since been incorporated into it. The Strategy subsequently received strong support and approval in June 2022 from the Policy Commission at its 86th Session and the Council at its 139th/140th Sessions.
3. Sharing aggregated statistical data on a global level is an essential part of the WCO Data Strategy, acknowledging that statistics are a foundational layer of the transition to data-driven organizations and the cornerstone of evidence-based policymaking.
4. To implement the Data Strategy, the Policy Commission and Council approved the establishment of the Working Group on Data and Statistics (the “Working Group”), which will hold its first meeting in November 2022. The primary objective of this Working Group will be to improve Customs statistics through new definitions, standards and methods and to make the WCO part of the global statistics community.

II. Role of the WCO Data Model in the harmonization of statistical data

5. The WCO Data Model (DM) is the data foundation for global trade and interoperability. It was developed to provide a global standard for cross-border data requirements to foster collaboration and the exchange of information between Customs administrations, government regulators and the business community.
6. Although the current scope of the WCO DM is to meet the operational and legal requirements of Customs and other cross-border regulatory agencies (CBRAs) responsible for border management, at its 235th/236th Sessions the PTC recognized the DM’s potential role in the harmonization of statistical operational Customs data for standardization of statistical data exchange and asked the Data Model Projects Team (DMPT) to explore the expansion the WCO DM to support new initiatives regarding the statistical data.
7. Following the establishment of the Working Group, the DMPT could potentially collaborate with and support the former’s activities. For instance, when defining statistical data metrics the Working Group could use the WCO DM as a *data catalogue* representing available Customs operational/transactional data. In addition, when new data elements for new metrics are required, the Working Group should consult with the DMPT to define the new data elements along with their structure and to incorporate them into the WCO DM. Such a collaborative process could help ensure that the defined statistical data is aligned with international standards, particularly the WCO DM.
8. The DMPT will discuss this initiative on the harmonization of statistical data at its 64th Meeting in September 2022 and will inform the PTC about the outcomes of the discussions.

III. Action required of the PTC

9. The PTC is invited to:

- take note of and provide guidance on the role of the WCO Data Model as the basis for harmonized metrics of statistics on Customs transactional data.

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