



PERMANENT TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE
- IN PERSON MEETING -
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239th/240th Sessions
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PC0721Ea

Brussels, 10 March 2023.

Customs - Port Cooperation
Guidelines on Cooperation Between Customs and Port Authorities

(Item XIII on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

In October 2021, the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) discussed, and supported a proposal made by the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) to jointly develop a set of Guidelines on Cooperation Between Customs and Port Authorities to Strengthen Trade Facilitation and Supply Chain Security. Following the PTC, interested members of IAPH and the WCO convened in a Mini Group to discuss the topic and develop the planned Guidelines. Subsequently, in October 2022, the PTC was updated on the progress of the development of the Guidelines and provided guidance and case studies.

The PTC will be invited to examine and consider endorsement of the finalized draft Guidelines on Cooperation Between Customs and Port Authorities.

Action required of the PTC

The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to:

- examine and endorse the draft Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities, attached as Annex to this document.

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I. Background

1. At its meeting in October 2021, the PTC discussed and approved a proposal by the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) to develop a set of Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities to Strengthen Trade Facilitation and Supply Chain Security and to accelerate the digitalization agenda. The objective was to address a number of challenges in establishing cooperation and help Members to establish a better working relationship with Port Authorities.
2. The core element of cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities is a focus on accelerating the digitalization agenda, in line with the WCO approach to Coordinated Border Management (CBM) and Digital Customs. Such cooperation could be used to address shared Customs strategic objectives in trade and transport facilitation, compliance and supply chain security. Several specific areas of cooperation that could be considered include:
 - establishment of a governance structure: e.g. institutional engagement, legal framework, memorandum of understanding, change management;
 - supply chain security: e.g. alignment of trusted traders programmes (Authorized Economic Operators);
 - digitalization: e.g. Smart Customs/Smart Port, Customs/Maritime Single Window, Port Community System, data harmonization and standardization and implementation thereof based on the WCO Data Model, advance electronic information, critical infrastructure (cybersecurity and cyber resilience); and
 - coordinated border control: Integrated Risk Management System, inspection equipment, interoperability, data collaboration and clearance systems.
3. In concluding the discussions at the October 2021 Meeting, the PTC thanked the IAPH for proposing the development of joint Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities; shared Member experiences and discussed the opportunities and challenges of developing joint guidance on this matter; took note of the next steps in advancing this joint guidance; and, invited a Mini Group of interested Members to support the development of the proposed Guidelines during the intersession.

II. Intersessional Developments

4. Further to the discussions at the PTC and its support for the proposal, the WCO and IAPH conducted a joint Workshop on Best Practices in Customs & Ports Collaboration¹ on 23 November 2021. The Workshop constituted a first step towards the joint development of international guidelines on Customs-Port cooperation to accelerate digitalization agendas, and aimed to launch a reinforced partnership between Customs and Port Authorities to facilitate smoother and more efficient supply chains. Twelve high-level speakers from Customs and Maritime/Port Authorities representing six countries shared their experiences in three sessions covering several aspects of interagency cooperation, namely the institutional and legal framework, practices on digital systems, and potential areas of cooperation.

¹ <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2021/november/deputy-secretary-general-participates-in-opening-of-iaph-wco.aspx>

5. On 20 December 2021, the WCO and the IAPH Secretariat sent a letter to WCO and IAPH members inviting them to join a kick-off meeting of a Mini Group of interested members on 20 January 2022. They were also invited to contribute to developing the planned Guidelines based on their national practices.
6. The Mini Group has met regularly, on a monthly basis. Some active participants in, and contributors to, the Mini Group include Bulgaria, China, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Morocco, and the United States. The Mini Group organizes its work based on a work plan, which includes a number of activities, such as developing the outline, writing, peer review, and text consolidation.
7. The Mini Group provided an update on the progress of its work to the PTC at its Meeting in October 2022. Following the Meeting, several Members, such as Australia, Italy, Indonesia, and Jamaica, provided additional contributions to the Guidelines.
8. The Mini Group managed to finalize the draft Guidelines as planned and now presents them to this PTC Meeting for approval. The draft Guidelines are attached as an Annex to this document.

III. Action Required of the PTC:

9. The PTC is invited to:
 - examine and endorse the draft Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities , attached as Annex to this document.

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