



PERMANENT TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE

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**GNC Utility Block on the transboundary movement of waste and updated
version of the CBM Compendium**

(Item IV.d on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

The 85th Session of the Policy Commission (PC), held in December 2021, highlighted the importance of the circular economy (CE) and reverse supply chains in connection with a review of the focus areas of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Subsequently, the 86th Session of the Policy Commission in June 2022 identified Green Customs as a focus area of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and endorsed the Implementation Plan 2022-2023. This includes piloting (with volunteer Members) the business process mapping of waste imports in order to harmonize the most relevant processes in the context of Coordinated Border Management (CBM) and the Single Window, and developing specific Globally Networked Customs (GNC) Utility Blocks (UB) for Customs-to-Customs (C2C) data exchange related to the waste trade.

In this regard, the PTC will be briefed on the outcomes of the Regional Workshop on GNC UB for the East African Community (EAC) with respect to imports/exports of waste (e-waste), organized with the support of the Sida-WCO Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernization Programme in Mombasa, Kenya on 17–21 July 2023. The regional workshop served as a consultative undertaking supported by the EAC Secretariat, and the start of the envisaged pilot on the waste trade between the EAC region and a number of exporting countries. The workshop considered two main business processes in the import and/or export of e-waste between the EAC countries and two exporting countries. The workshop also drafted Executive Summaries on two GNC UBs for the exchange of Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and of Customs declarations.

Actions required of the Permanent Technical Committee:

The PTC is invited to:

- take note of the draft Executive Summary of the GNC UB with respect to the transboundary movement of waste; and
- endorse the updated version of the CBM Compendium.

I. Background

1. The 85th Session of the Policy Commission (PC), held in December 2021, highlighted the importance of the environmental aspect, the circular economy (CE) and reverse supply chains in connection with a review of the focus areas of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Subsequently, the 86th Session of the Policy Commission in June 2022 identified Green Customs as a focus area of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025, and endorsed the Implementation Plan 2022-2023. This includes piloting (with volunteer Members) the business process mapping of waste imports in order to harmonize the most relevant processes in the context of Coordinated Border Management (CBM) and the Single Window, and developing specific Globally Networked Customs (GNC) Utility Blocks (UB) (with volunteer Members) for C2C data exchange related to the waste trade. In June 2023, the Policy Commission noted that the Basel Convention's Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure was still written as a paper-based procedure, and that this adversely affected its incorporation into digital Customs systems, such as single windows, which could otherwise facilitate the exchange of data between Customs and environmental agencies in a timely manner, and enable the systematic interconnectivity of PIC processes between exporting, transiting and importing country.
 2. Similar discussions took place at the 14th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Basel Convention, where Parties shared their experiences in developing and implementing electronic systems for exchanging information on or controlling movements of goods and wastes. The COP also considered the needs involved in making the system part of a more general system, such as a Single Window environment, to enhance information sharing between the environmental authorities and other regulatory agencies, including Customs.
 3. On 19 August 2020, the WCO concluded a Grant Agreement with the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to build on the success of their partnership to support Customs modernization efforts to boost trade facilitation and economic integration in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernization Programme for Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2020-2024, also referred to as the Sida-WCO TTFCM Programme, is providing technical assistance and capacity building support to selected WCO Member countries from the East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) to implement the trade facilitation measures under WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA). The overall objective is to contribute to improving the business environment for cross-border trade in the selected countries and across the affected Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
 4. The Programme implementation consists of six components, including Customs systems interconnectivity and enforcement of Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs). The Customs interconnectivity component aims to ensure that the Customs administrations'
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systems are interconnected to enhance cooperation for automated data exchange enabling the simplification and harmonization of border procedures. The MEAs component, on the other hand, is focused on building the capacity of Customs administrations to implement the Montreal Protocol and Basel Convention Agreements.

5. The Secretariat conducted a desk analysis to identify possible volunteer Members for the pilot. In this regard, the WCO in consultation with the EAC Secretariat, identified the EAC countries as suitable for the pilot, given their current trade data on waste.
6. Current trade data¹ for Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in the EAC region indicate that they are the main entry points of illegal waste exports originating from Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong, China. On e-waste in particular, the main source countries identified, based on recent data, include the United Arab Emirates, China, India and the United States, whereby Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi were the main destinations for these commodities.
7. Based on the information collected, and leveraging on the Sida-WCO TFCM Programme, the Secretariat organized a pilot through a Regional Workshop on **Globally Network Customs (GNC) Utility Block (UB) for the East African Community (EAC) with respect to imports/exports of waste (e-waste)**, that was held in **Mombasa, Kenya** on 17-21 July 2023. The workshop served as a platform for consultation and gaining a better understanding of the dynamics of trade in e-waste in the EAC as well as current business processes for the import and/or export of waste (e-waste) between EAC countries and selected exporting countries. The workshop also served to develop a high-level Executive Summary on GNC UBs for the exchange of PIC data and of Customs declarations.
8. A total of 28 participants attended the workshop, which was hosted by the Kenya Revenue Authority/Kenya School of Revenue Administration (KESRA). Members were represented by the following institutions:
 - OBR (Office Burundais des Recettes) and the OBPE (Office Burundais pour la Protection de L'environnement);
 - RRA (Rwanda Revenue Authority);
 - URA (Uganda Revenue Authority) and NEMA (National Environmental Authority in Uganda);
 - TRA (Tanzania Revenue Authority) and NEMC (National Environmental Management Council);
 - KRA (Kenya Revenue Authority) and NEMA (National Environmental Management Authority in Kenya).
9. Two countries which export to the EAC were also invited to the workshop:
 - Malaysia, represented by the RMCD (Royal Malaysia Customs Department) and the Malaysian Ministry of Climate Change;
 - Pakistan, represented by the FBR (Federal Board Revenue of Pakistan) and the Pakistan Single Window Agency (PSWA);

¹ UNEP report (WASTE CRIME – WASTE RISKS, 2018), data provided by the EAC Secretariat.

- Further, in attendance was a representative of the EAC Secretariat.

II. Diagnostic questionnaire

10. A diagnostic questionnaire (Annex I) has been drawn up for the development of the GNC UB for e-waste Trade in East Africa. The questionnaire is tailored to both importing and exporting countries.
11. The questionnaire was proposed as a tool to facilitate dialogue among the competent agencies. These agencies plan to undertake process streamlining and aim to develop modalities to better interconnect, so as to foster the exchange of information at the border effective risk management and efficient border procedures for the transboundary movement of e-waste.

III. The outcomes of the pilot

12. The Basel Convention Secretariat (BCS) presented the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, and its Technical Guidelines, particularly in relation to the E-waste Amendments.
13. Participants noted the current challenges in the full implementation of the Convention, including communication between consent parties, reporting limitations as well as limited reference to the full spectrum of e-waste. As a result, the following amendments are proposed **to the CBM Compendium** as presented in Annex II to this document:
 - additional text is proposed in section **6.9.5. Risk management** as part of coordinated border management of waste trade
 - **a new paragraph 6.9.8, “Coordinated border management and interconnectivity in the context of e-waste: highlights from the Sida Project,”** is proposed in chapter 6.9. Standards of the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, after “6.9.7 Coordinated border management in the context of plastic waste: highlights from the Asia Pacific Plastic Waste (APPW) Project”
 - **a new Annex IV** is proposed on “**Coordinated border management and interconnectivity in the context of e-waste: experiences of the Sida Project**”.
14. The pilot considered two main business processes in the import and/or export of e-waste between the EAC countries and the two exporting countries.
15. The workshop proposed business process mapping for PIC and export processing, including processes related to licences, permits or certification (Annex III).
16. The workshop also provided inputs into the development of Executive Summaries on two GNC UBs, namely for the exchange of PIC processes and for the exchange of export data for Customs clearance purposes (Annex IV). It proposed setting up an intersessional working group (Policy, Business and Technical) as a way forward to further develop the UBs.
17. In connection with the ongoing BCS Working Group on electronic approaches to notification and movement documents with a view to developing a digitalization solution for the transboundary movement of waste, the outcomes of the GNC-UB development could

be shared with the BCS Working Group so that it could consider using the GNC-UB methodology in its digitalization solution.

IV. Action required by the PTC

18. The PTC is invited to:

- take note of the drafted the Executive Summary of the GNC UB with respect to the transboundary movement of waste; and
- endorse the updated version of the CBM Compendium.

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