



Brussels, 1 September 2023.

Customs-Port Cooperation

Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities

(Item X on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

At its meeting in April 2023, the PTC examined and endorsed the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities in their current format including the input from Germany and other delegates, and asked that the Secretariat engage in dialogue and work with the World Shipping Council and other interested stakeholders to incorporate their perspective and input into the Guidelines for the PTC's consideration at its next meeting. Subsequently, the Council approved the draft Guidelines at its meeting in June 2023.

In addition, at the 239th/240th Sessions of the PTC, an observer suggested that the development of cooperation between Customs and airports could be addressed in a manner similar to that of Customs-Ports cooperation.

Action required of the PTC

The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to:

- discuss and take note of the proposals submitted during the intersession for potential incorporation into the Customs-Port Cooperation Guidelines; and
- discuss and provide guidance concerning the possibility of addressing the development of cooperation between Customs and airport authorities.

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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. On 20 December 2021, the WCO and IAPH Secretariats sent a letter to WCO and IAPH Members inviting them to attend a kick-off meeting for 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.
3. The Mini Group has met regularly and succeeded in finalizing the draft Guidelines as planned.
4. At its meeting in April 2023, the PTC examined and endorsed the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities in their current format including the input from Germany and other delegates, and asked that the Secretariat engage in dialogue and work with the World Shipping Council (WSC) and other interested stakeholders to incorporate their perspective and input into the Guidelines for the PTC's consideration at its next meeting.
5. Subsequently, the Council approved the Guidelines at its meeting in June 2023. The Guidelines are available for WCO Members as [Annex VI](#)¹ to the 239th/240th PTC Meeting Summary Report. The Guidelines will be officially launched by the WCO and the IAPH at the World Port Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 31 October to 2 November 2023. The WCO will be represented at the launch by the Deputy Secretary General, Ricardo Trevino.

II. Intersessional developments

6. Following the PTC's decision, the WCO Secretariat invited interested stakeholders, including the WSC and Australian Border Force (ABF), to share their input for potential incorporation into the Guidelines. Both the WSC and ABF agreed to update the 241st/242nd PTC on the progress of consolidating their inputs with the aim of submitting their final contribution for consideration by the 243rd/244th PTC Meeting in April 2024.
7. Some of the key points that the WSC envisaged to incorporate into the Guidelines include:
 - Placing greater emphasis on the need for port and Customs authorities to cooperate and consult with carriers and other port users when developing data exchange strategies, including advance cargo security requirements.
 - Seeking clarifications on aspects of the relationships between Customs, port authorities, port community systems, single windows and data providers.

¹ <https://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/meeting-documents/permanent-technical-committee/239/pc0724eae6.pdf?lang=en>

- Incorporating further lessons from the 'Operation TIN CAN' model of enhanced cooperation between ports, Customs and carriers to detect and deter all types of illicit goods trafficking.
 - Highlighting the need for greater clarity, cooperation and a common approach to the identification and treatment of uncleared and abandoned containers.
8. In addition to the WSC proposal, the Secretariat received a request from the ABF to consider including information relating to "undeclared and abandoned containers", which also has correlations with some of the inputs envisaged by the WSC.

III. Cooperation between Customs and airports

9. In addition, at the 239th/240th PTC Meeting, an observer suggested that the development of cooperation between Customs and airports could be addressed in a manner similar to that of Customs-Ports cooperation.
10. At the same time, the WCO Secretariat acknowledges that any further actions in this regard should be undertaken based on Members' viewpoints and guidance. As such, the guidance from Members will be crucial in shaping the potential direction and scope of this proposal.

IV. Action required of the PTC:

11. The PTC is invited to:
- discuss and take note of the proposals submitted during the intersession for potential incorporation into the Customs-Port Cooperation Guidelines; and
 - discuss and provide guidance concerning the possibility of addressing the development of cooperation between Customs and airport authorities.

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