2021/2022
KOREA RCL BRIEF
VOL.2
1. Message from the Director General of the WCO A/P RCL Korea

Dear WCO members,

Hello?

I’m Jin-Cheol Yang, the Director General of Central Customs Laboratory. It is my pleasure that I write to you as the Head of Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) Korea. Welcome to the Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) Korea brief.

It is my great honor to notify you that on July 11th, 2022, I was appointed Director General of CCL Korea which also acts as the WCO RCL.

I would like to show my appreciation to all the members in the region for your continuous and full cooperation and partnership. I have been aware of the importance of the roles of the customs laboratory as the circumstances in which we live change more rapidly and unpredictably than ever before. I hope we will work closely with you and contribute to the development of the customs laboratory.

From the second half of last year to the first half of this year, the RCL Korea has carried out the following activities:

- The RCL Korea attended the 2021 Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Online Workshop on Capacity Building for Digital Customs and delivered a presentation on analytical technology.
- The RCL Korea ran Customs Laboratory Professionals Programs in order to strengthen the partnership with and increase its contribution to the development of its Uzbek counterpart.
- The RCL Korea has attended sessions of the Harmonized System Committee (HSC), Harmonized Review Sub-Committee (RSC), and Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) in order to enhance our cooperation with other WCO members by sharing information on classification of goods and products, and providing support and cooperation.
- Owing to the Covid-19 situation, The RCL Korea participated in the first RCL Heads meeting online where the participants shared information and promoted our activities.
- The RCL Korea participated in the Regional Seminar on Drugs and Drug Precursors held by RILO AP in June 2022.

I believe that by extending our cooperation and sharing knowledge of customs analysis, we will continue supporting one another and strengthening the relationship among all the members. I look forward to your support and cooperation.
2. Customs Laboratory Professionals Program

(‘Nov. 15, 2021 – Nov. 26, 2021’)
- Two officers from Uzbekistan completed the Customs Laboratory Professionals Program for 2 weeks -

As the RCL Korea contributes to the development of customs analysis technique and gains positive recognition internationally, the RCL Korea has run Customs Laboratory Professionals Programs to lay the foundation for further networks by cultivating professional analysts and building interpersonal networks with other WCO members.

In 2021, The RCL Korea ran a Customs Laboratory Professionals Program for two Uzbek officers from 15th to 26th of November. The program included:

- Introduction of WCO A/P RCL and the CCL Korea,
- Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes analysis,
- DNA analysis on drugs of vegetable origin, drug analysis,
- Analysis of beverages containing alcohol,
- Plasticizer analysis,
- Analysis with X-Ray diffraction and X-Ray fluorescence.

Throughout the program, the RCL Korea not only established the groundwork for strengthening ties and exchanging information with its Uzbek counterpart, but also maintained its positive images as a technologically advanced member in customs analysis. Since we received requests on what should be added to the program, we will consider what is best for trainees in the next Customs Laboratory Professionals program and formulate action plans for the interaction between the CCLs of Korea and Uzbekistan to carry out.
3. 2021 LAC Online Workshop on Capacity Building for Digital Customs

(‘Dec. 7, 2021 - Dec. 10, 2021’)
- Ninety middle managers from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Jamaica, Suriname, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Panama attended -

The 2021 LAC Online Workshop on Capacity Building for Digital Customs was held from December 7th to 10th and The RCL Korea participated and delivered a presentation on analytic technology. Approximately ninety middle managers from nine countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Jamaica, Suriname, Paraguay, Bolivia, Panama) gathered in the online workshop in which IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) joined as a co-host.

The presentation started with introducing our laboratory tasks, facilities, laboratory operation, and analytical instruments. It also included the role of the RCL Korea in the A/P region and international activities, HS classification with analytical instruments such as SEM, XRD, XRF, and GC, and analysis cases.

The RCL Korea will continue to work on understanding demand for digital capacity of the countries through an in-depth analysis with the consulting results for later discussion.

4. The 1st meeting of the Heads of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory

(‘May. 10, 2022’)
- Five countries of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory participated

The Heads of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory met online for the first time on May 10th, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen mutual cooperation and explore ways of promoting information exchanges. It
began with having the heads from the five countries introduce themselves and it was followed by exchanging and presenting information on activities of the WCO, ROCB A/P, RILO A/P and RCL.

The RCL Korea delivered a presentation after the other four regional customs laboratories in the A/P region and the presenter of The RCL Korea spoke about the structure of the organization that consists of one central customs laboratory and five local customs laboratories and the tasks that it performs by providing analysis & classification advice, research & technical guidance, and facilitating international cooperation. The presenter also emphasized the roles the RCL Korea plays in running capacity building programs such as training services and participating in international activities.

It was a great opportunity for the five countries in the A/P region that have their own RCLs to get to understand one another. Since they function as customs laboratories, there are common features such as carrying out analysis for HS classification or for narcotic drug identification. However, there are differences in terms of the ways that they operate their laboratories and scientific instruments in their possession.

Due to the pandemic, unfortunately, it took place online even though it was the first time the heads of the RCLs in the A/P region met. We believe it could have resulted in even better communications had it been a face-to-face meeting since we are certain that when it comes to exchanging views, sharing practical experience and expertise and even generating fresh ideas for the development of the RCL, there is no better way of facilitating improvements in customs analysis and seeking cooperation than offline meetings. We look forward to meeting with them in the near future head-to-head.

5. Participation in the Regional Seminar on Drugs and Drug Precursors held by RILO AP

(June. 16, 2022)

- Eighteen countries of WCO Asia/Pacific members, RILO AP, ROCB AP, UN ODC, and RCL Korea attended

On June 16th 2022, RILO AP hosted the Regional Seminar via the online platform ZOOM. The RCL Korea attended this seminar as one of the presenters.

There were five presenters whose presentations covered different topics on drugs within 30 minutes. The RCL Korea gave a presentation about illegal drug issues in the field of customs analysis. He introduced the identification methods of drugs such as methamphetamine, cannabis, synthetic cannabinoids, LSD, ketamine and also provided examples of detected cases of these enumerated drugs.
6. Support and Management of Analysis Work in The WCO

1) The RCL Korea attended the 37th Session of the Scientific Sub-Committee of The WCO

The Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) performs as an advisory body of the Council on questions involving chemical or other scientific matters. It also serves as a forum where the exchange of views with regard to customs-related scientific and engineering developments and best practices by the customs laboratory services of Council Members takes place. It plays a crucial role in assisting the HS Committee (HSC) and the Review Sub-Committee (RSC) by advising on classification questions involving scientific issues and providing scientific and engineering support and advice.

It normally holds at least one session a year. For the past two years, it had taken place online due to the pandemic caused by the spread of Covid-19 and The RCL Korea attended the 37th session that was held online from January 19th to 28th, 2022.

At the session, various topics, including HS classification of goods on the INN list, classification and analysis methods for specific goods or products that belong to Sections I to VII such as LPG, collagen sausage casing, and PCB, and capacity building activities with respect to customs laboratories were discussed.

The Delegate from Korea reported that, due to the pandemic, the year 2020 was unfortunate for Korea Central Customs Laboratory, not allowing them to run the Customs Laboratory Professionals Program, consisting of on-site training. In 2021, however, it successfully ran its Customs Laboratory Professionals Programs for two weeks by having invited and provided two staff analysts from Uzbekistan Central Customs Laboratory with learning opportunities through classification analysis, roles and responsibilities of RCL, and laboratory operation. He also added that Korea Central Customs Laboratory, as Regional Customs Laboratory, will continue to support capacity-building activities for WCO member countries. Finally, he informed that Korea Customs Service donates around 2.2 million Euros every year in supporting the WCO capacity building activities and stated that the RCL Korea will continue to make every effort to enhance the capacity of Customs Laboratory areas and upgrade programs in close collaboration with Korea Customs headquarters and the WCO.

2) The RCL Korea attended the 68th and 69th Sessions of the Harmonized System Committee of The WCO

The Harmonized System Committee (HSC) acts under the overall direction of the WCO Council and Policy Commission with the purpose and scope of uniform interpretation and application, update, and promotion of classification of goods, and examination of general questions and policy matter regarding the HS.

The HS committee meets twice a year and each session lasts two weeks. It had been held online for the last two years due to the pandemic and The RCL Korea attended the 68th and 69th sessions that were conducted via an online platform respectively in September 2021 and March 2022.

At the 68th and 69th sessions, the RCL Korea presented opinions on HS classification of the agenda items such as rehydrated dried fish, rooibos tea, and presented an amendment to the Explanatory Notes clarifying the scope of heading 24.04. The participants shared views and exchanged opinions. Votes were taken on the discussed items of which HS classification was not decided during the meetings via the CLiKC! platform and the other ones that were not discussed due to lack of time or information were relegated to the next session.

As we prepared for the sessions, we fully appreciated every moment to discuss HS classification, which helped drive further studies into items at issue and exchange views. We hope to make more contributions to further progress in HS classification.
3) The RCL Korea attended the 59th and 60th Sessions of the Harmonized Review Sub-Committee of The WCO

The Harmonized Review Sub-Committee (RSC) is under the overall direction of the HS Committee. It pursues a review of the HS under the general guidance of the HSC by proposing amendments to the HS when it may be considered desirable according to the needs of users and to changes in technology or in patterns of international trade and preparing any consequential amendments to the Explanatory Notes and the Compendium of Classification Opinions for consideration.

It usually meets twice a year and each session lasts one to two weeks depending on the number of items on the agenda. It had been held online for the last two years due to the pandemic and The RCL Korea attended the 59th and 60th sessions that took place online respectively in November 2021 and May 2022.

WCO members were invited to review amendments of texts in HS Explanatory Notes and examine the addition of new headings and subheadings or alignment of meaning of texts in English and French versions of HS Explanatory Notes.

It was a great opportunity for us to consider what changes to be made in Explanatory Notes and Compendium of Classification Opinions as goods and products change how we trade when they are newly produced or no longer consumed by participating in this meeting. It also helped understand the way the WCO members view items at issue.