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RCL Japan Brief



By Central Customs Laboratory, Japan

Message from the DG of the WCO A/P RCL Japan



MASUHIRA Hiromi
Director General of
CCL Japan

Dear Readers,

It is my great pleasure that I write to you as the Head of the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) Japan. Welcome to Vol.17 of the RCL Japan Brief.

Since the publication of the last edition, the Government of Japan has gradually eased its border measures, closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in Japan and abroad and how the global situation is changing. In response to this move, Japan Customs can now conduct capacity building activities face-to-face, which had been conducted online since 2020, and accordingly, the CCL Japan also has resumed accepting trainees.

This volume includes the CCL Japan-held WCO RCL Professionals Programme 2022/23 for 5 Customs chemists from Moldova, Mongolia, Sudan, Thailand and Uganda to share the experience and knowledge about Customs laboratory matters. It is our great honour to respond to the needs of WCO Capacity Building Programmes in the customs analysis field and to work with the trainees.

We worked with the trainees for six weeks and had various experiences together. At the end of this programme, each trainee gave a wonderful presentation to show us what they learned and their proposed future actions after they return to their office. It is our strong hope that this training will be helpful to each trainee in the development of his/her subsequent analytical work at Customs and keep a good relationship between RCL Japan and the trainees.

Other than the training programme for Customs chemists, the CCL received 11 participants in the GRIPS WCO Scholarship Programme and International Training Programme in September 2022 and presented CCL's overview and explained the importance of Customs analysis in order to achieve the

three missions of Japan Customs. We also received 4 participants in the WCO 83rd Fellowship Programme as an international activity under customs technical cooperation in October 2022.

In April 2023, the CCL Japan will host the 2nd Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory and preparations are currently underway in cooperation with the ROCB. We hope that this meeting will provide an opportunity to promote cooperation among RCLs that proactively implement capacity building and information exchange in the A/P region. We also hope that this will result in stronger relationships between A/P Members and further promote regional capacity building activities in the field of Customs laboratory.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of four characters: 前平 弘美.

MASUHIRA Hiromi
Director General of CCL Japan

WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme 2022/23

As one of RCL Japan's activities, the CCL implemented "WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme" under the sponsorship of CCF/JAPAN. After a one-week workshop on HS classification at the WCO Headquarters (Brussels), the programme at the CCL was held from 24 October to 1 December 2022, which provided five selected officials (from Moldova, Mongolia, Sudan, Thailand and Uganda) with an opportunity to obtain and update their knowledge and skills in chemical analysis for HS classification purposes and to improve their knowledge about HS classification.



A feature of this programme at the CCL is that each trainee and the CCL have prior discussions in order to set up a programme based on each trainee's requests. This is because priority goods to be analyzed for each customs administration are not always the same, and the CCL tries to respond to such requests to the extent possible. Each trainee focused on several commodities recognizing the purpose of analysis, then conducted chemical analysis learning followed by short guidance provided by our chemists on the principles of its analysis, efficient analytical methods and the use of the equipment.

In fact, our chemists, sometimes in a team, prepared for training sessions in advance while carrying out their regular work. The trainees actively participated in the training and asked our chemists a lot of questions even during breaks. This programme was a wonderful opportunity also for our chemists to share their experiences in chemical analysis and exchange views on HS classification in relation to certain items.





In addition to the main training sessions at the CCL, trainees also had an opportunity to visit “Nagoya Customs,” one of the nine regional customs in Japan. They increased their knowledge of Japan Customs’ operations other than laboratory work in order to understand the importance of close cooperation between the Customs laboratory and other related sections such as customs clearance sections which are in charge of physical inspection of the goods and taking appropriate samples for analysis.



The CCL believes that this training would help all the trainees get ideas and tips for resolving their laboratories’ challenges including ensuring and facilitating proper HS classification. It is also expected that this training would promote technical interchanges between Customs laboratories and could therefore serve as a catalyst for constructing a network among Customs laboratories at the global level.

※WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme

Since its launch in October 2013, the WCO, in cooperation with Japan Customs, has been providing the training programmes intended to improve knowledge and skills in Customs chemical analysis in developing countries.



Messages from the Participants of WCO RCL Professionals Programme 2022/23

FROM **MR. MIHAIL SECU**
CUSTOMS SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



The WCO Regional Customs Laboratories Professionals Programme proved to be an outstanding experience that I would compare to a master's degree, but with the added benefit of being completed in just six weeks. As someone who came from the Moldovan customs laboratory, I had the opportunity to learn about new equipment and analysis methods that I had never been exposed to before.

This programme provided me with hands-on laboratory experience that will allow me to apply the learned knowledge and techniques in our customs laboratory at home. I had a chance to work with experienced professionals in the field, which provided valuable insights and feedback that enhanced my practical skills and capabilities. I was exposed to the latest techniques and methods in the field of chemistry, and had the opportunity to learn to use highly

specialized equipment. The six-week programme was extremely intense and challenging, but it was also incredibly rewarding, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated in such an outstanding programme.

One of the most impressive aspects of the programme was the Japanese precision and attention to detail. This was evident in every aspect of the training, from the classroom lectures to the hands-on practical training. It was truly inspiring to see how dedicated the Japanese customs laboratory professionals were while performing their duties.

Apart from the practical aspects, this programme also helped me to better understand the combined nomenclature and the classification of various types of goods. This was possible because the programme effectively combined both practical and theoretical aspects, ensuring that trainees had a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The practical training was also very perfectly aligned with the theoretical teachings on the nomenclature. This helped me to see how the nomenclature could be applied in real-world situations and gave me a deeper understanding of the subject. Overall, this programme was an excellent opportunity for me to gain both practical and theoretical knowledge about the nomenclature, which will allow me to better respond to the new challenges.

After returning from the WCO Regional Customs Laboratories Professionals Programme, our laboratory management included several of the analysis methods and ideas that I had learned during my time in Japan in our annual development plan. This will not only help to improve our laboratory's capabilities in the future but also aid us in better serving our stakeholders. The programme was a great opportunity for me to gain knowledge and skills that are directly applicable to my work, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of it. These skills will be very helpful for the future, and I am confident that they will continue to be a valuable asset for our laboratory as we strive to meet the evolving needs of our stakeholders.

I would highly recommend the WCO Regional Customs Laboratories Professionals Programme to other members of the World Customs Organization. It is an inconceivable experience that will help them to excel in their chosen field. The precision and attention to detail in the programme and the knowledge and skills gained will be truly invaluable.

FROM MRS. MUNKHTSATSRAL BURENJARGAL CUSTOMS CENTRAL LABORATORY OF CUSTOMS GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF MONGOLIAN

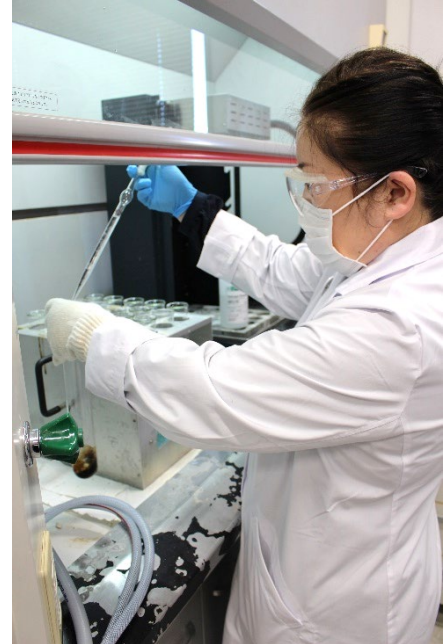
The 2022/2023 WCO/Japan Regional Customs Laboratory Professional Programme was a useful fusion of theory and practice.

Customs laboratories all over the world must not only determine the HS code, but also the origin of the goods. At this point, I am extremely grateful that the Japanese Customs Laboratory's chemists have taught me how to tell whether honey is artificial or natural and how to spot synthetic drugs.

The Japanese customs laboratory chemists not only had high professional skills, but they also perform well, had a positive attitude, and were helpful. Therefore, in just six weeks, we have learned about the analysis methods (a total of 22 analysis methods of 7 types), including their theoretical basic concepts, sample preparation, measurements, result processing, etc.

I presented "What I learned in the Japanese laboratory" twice after returning to my home country. Additionally, I have ordered the equipment and supplies I need to successfully implement the analysis techniques I learned at RCL Japan. Everything learned at RCL will be tested and repeated in the future, according to the Japanese theory of "one by one," and will be fully implemented in my country.

The chance to learn from diligent, successful Japanese people is playing a significant role in both my professional and personal careers.



FROM MR. NAZAR HASSAN OMER ELHAG SUDAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITY

I thank the WCO and Japan Central Customs Laboratory for this great opportunity to participate in this useful and valuable programme, and I would like to explain the great benefit that I got and then Sudan Customs laboratories from this programme in several aspects:

In the CCL, I gained additional knowledge especially regarding the implementation of new technologies and techniques by doing soft experiments on real samples with advanced and sophisticated equipment with the help of very cooperative chemists as well as knowledge to enhance the efficiency of how to manage and organize laboratories, how to link the results of analysis with HS and its interpretations, as well as analysis for the purposes of protecting the economy and society from commercial fraud and smuggling of prohibited substances such as drugs and others.



Through the programme at the CCL, a number of practical experiences, which the participants demanded, were conducted based on the difficulties they face during the analysis operations in their countries, and among these experiences that were of high importance to me:

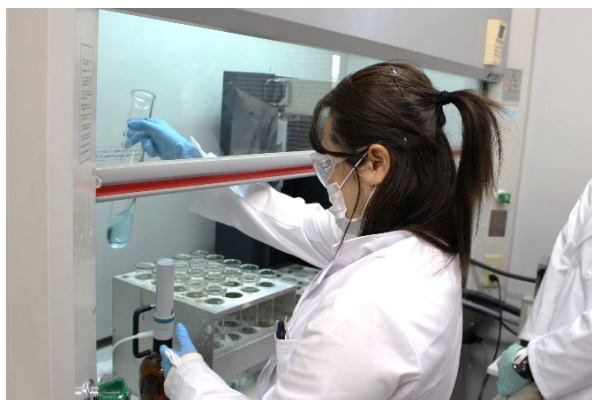
- 1. Tile analysis** To distinguish between different types of tiles, according to (Chapter 69), such as porcelain and ceramics by determining the water absorption coefficient, as well as the analysis of the surface and components of the samples with the surface electronic microscope. This analysis conducted by 1st analysis section.
- 2. Analysis of lubricating oil and wax** This analysis method is applied to lubricating oils which are classified in heading 27.10 or 34.03 in and which require the determination of their petroleum contents by conducting the analysis by FTIR and determining the volatile matter content, as well as identifying additives through the rubber membrane, extraction and column chromatography. This analysis conducted by 3rd analysis section.
- 3. Quantitative analysis of milk preparations** Confirm the content of natural milk constituents in samples in order to know their classification according to the HS in chapters 04, 19 and 21. When we get natural milk constituents, we need to know moisture content, ash content, fat content, lactose content, and protein content in a sample by means of various analyses. This analysis conducted by 2nd analysis section.

I recommend increasing the chapters that are selected in the WCO secretariat for this training programme to include chapters that contain chemicals such as 31, 32, 33 and 34, as well as fabrics instead of chapters 84 and 85. I recommend when sending the samples that the participants wish to

analyze at the CCL in advance, that it is before their arrival in Japan. I highly recommend this programme to all developing member states to develop their knowledge, skills and laboratories and to convey the experience of the CCL to their countries to keep pace with technology and development in the areas of analysis and laboratory management.

After the programme was over and I returned to my country, I submitted a comprehensive report on the programme and its importance to develop Sudan Customs laboratories, with recommendations that will be applied during the current year, including the division of the laboratory into three main sections, establishment, research and development sections, and take measures to introduce the WCO Customs Laboratory Management Tool (version 2022) into Sudan Customs laboratories.

FROM MS. WARANYA DACHAPATOOMWON CUSTOMS LABORATORY STANDARD SECTION, THAILAND



After six weeks of training in the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme at the CCL Japan. I achieved all the purposes of this programme. I obtained and updated my knowledge and skills in chemical analysis for HS classification purposes and practical skills regarding the implementation of new technologies, techniques and the use of sophisticated equipment.

The standard analytical techniques and procedures were very helpful for my administration to deal with the government or private-sector laboratories related to Customs to perform the tests or method for Customs purposes for example; the section of ore and alloy analysis can help the problem of anti-dumping duty on steel products, the techniques of the HPLC, GC-MS, GC-FID and IR can be applied for analysis of the “Fuel marker” in petroleum oil products. The other method will be applied to our analytical process (inhouse method) that can solve the primary problem or give the information to the relevant section such as the frontline officials, the clearance and the enforcement section.

The procedure of customs works in the CCL especially how they communicate between the analysis section and other sections, the good organization and good practice in the laboratory of both the CCL and Nagoya, and the training programme for their customs officer to become honest, patient, and disciplined. This information was very impressive and helpful to apply for more efficiency and performance in Thai customs in the future.

After I returned to my country, I made the report about the knowledge that I have learned during this programme and it was published on the intranet for every customs officer who can find and download it. The laboratory management and good practice will be applied to our action plan of the Customs Laboratory Standard Section. I have been proving my knowledge and skill on the training especially the

chemical analysis and goods identification to our working group (Scientist) and also planning to provide it for another customs officer. For more efficiency of this training programme, I would like to recommend to increase the period time of training at the WCO headquarters and adding practical sessions with actual actions of case studies in analysis procedures for the purpose of classification.



FROM MR. FRANCIS EYARU CUSTOMS UGANDA REVENUE AUTHORITY



During my training at the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory at Japan Customs that took about six weeks, I was able to obtain knowledge and skills in areas of chemical analysis of the different products for customs purposes and also got exposed to the Japanese culture and also had a chance to interface with new methods of detection of drugs using trace detection system, GC-MS and maintenance of the GC-MS analytical equipment and Trace Detection System (TDS).

Furthermore, I was able to learn how to interpret the analytical results and make a proper HS classification decision. What impressed me mainly was the use of wet chemistry techniques to solve some HS classification issues like at Nagoya Customs, we were able to apply wet chemistry techniques in classification of battered prawn. It was to be classified under HS code 1605.21 instead of 2106.90 and these analytical methods, knowledge and skills will enable me to perform my duties better in my tour of duty as a customs officer.

When I completed the programme successfully and returned to my Customs Administration in Uganda and shared the knowledge and skills that I attained throughout the training programme with my colleagues in the tariff classification section.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the World Customs Organization and Japan Customs for having given me the opportunity to enhance my knowledge and skills in areas of HS classification and chemical analysis for customs purposes.

Other Programmes for Visitors at CCL Japan

GRIPS WCO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

On 21 September, the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) received 11 participants (note) in the GRIPS WCO Scholarship Programme and International Training Programme for public officers as an international activity under customs technical cooperation. The CCL presented CCL's overview and explained the importance of Customs analysis in order to achieve the three missions of Japan Customs. Demonstrations of analytical instruments and inspection equipment were given by the chemists of the CCL.

The participants of this programme will be studying in the Public Finance Program until September 2023 at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Japan.

(note) Paraguay, Cambodia, Tanzania, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Botswana, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Zambia, Japan



THE WCO 83RD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

On 19 October, the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) received 4 participants (note) in the WCO (World Customs Organization) 83rd Fellowship Programme as an international activity under customs technical cooperation. The CCL welcomed them and presented CCL's overview, the importance of Customs analysis in order to achieve the three missions of Japan Customs and activities as the Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) to support the WCO members in the region to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of Customs Laboratory analysis work. In addition, the CCL provided demonstrations of analytical instruments and inspection equipment in the experiment building.

(note) Algeria, Union of Comoros, Mali, Togo

The CCL Japan Attends the 38th Session of the Scientific Sub-Committee of the WCO



The meeting, which had been held exclusively online for the past two years due to COVID-19, was held in a hybrid format this year. The Japanese delegates participated in the committee in-person at Brussels and expressed their views on the proposed agenda items. Also, taking this opportunity, the delegates were reunited with Ms. Waranya Dachapatoomwon, who was there as a representative of Thai Customs. Ms. Waranya received training at the CCL for 6 weeks and returned to Thailand in the beginning of December 2022 to work for the Thai Customs Laboratory.

Topics discussed at the SSC/38 are posted on the Members-only page of the WCO website. With regard to the agenda items on RCLs, it was decided that each RCL will report on its annual schedule and activities on the agenda item of future SSC meetings.

※The Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) serves as an advisory body of the WCO Council on questions for chemical or other scientific matters. A particularly important role played by the SSC is to assist the Harmonized System Committee (HSC) by providing technical advice on questions referred to it by the HSC.

Future Activities

- From 18 to 20 April 2023, the 2nd Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory at RCL Japan (CCL Japan).
- Issuance of the 8th volume of “Collection of Good Practices on Customs Chemical Analysis.”

Please send your comments or questions to cclmaile@mof.go.jp, if any. You can find further information about CCL, Japan on our website: http://www.customs.go.jp/ccl/e_index.htm

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