



September 2023; Volume 18

RCL Japan Brief



By Central Customs Laboratory, Japan

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



Dear Readers,

It is my great honor to have this opportunity to greet all the readers of the RCL Japan Brief.

I'm delighted to inform you that I was appointed as Director General of the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL), Ministry of Finance, Japan, on July 1, 2023. This is my second time working for the CCL. I am pleased to work here again, having gained a wide range of experience at seven local Customs. Since the CCL Japan is functioning as the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL), I would like to express my gratitude to all members in the region for your strong cooperation. In response to changes in

the environment surrounding customs, the role of the customs laboratory is becoming more important. It is my great pleasure to work closely with you and to tackle the emerging challenges for the Customs laboratory.

I would like to inform you that the members of the international team at the RCL Japan changed at the beginning of July because of the annual personnel shift, and the members continue to contribute to important roles within the RCL. I would like to ask for your continuous support and cooperation for our new international team.

In the first half of this year, the CCL Japan conducted the following RCL activities:

As for information sharing activities in the customs analysis field, the RCL Japan issued the eighth volume of "Collection of Good Practices on Customs Chemical Analysis" this June. We highly appreciate other members providing their good practices for the new volume.

The CCL Japan hosted the 2nd RCL Heads meeting this April held at the CCL Japan in hybrid format. Out of ten Regional Customs Laboratories in the world, five are in the AP region. I am of the opinion that networking and

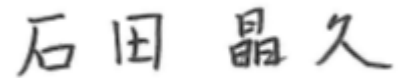
information sharing between RCLs are especially important since Customs chemical analysis requires a high level of experience and expertise. I am sure that the RCL Heads meeting contributes to enhancing regional capacity building.

This volume includes an article contributed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) expert in Malaysia.

We are pleased that face-to-face workshops in Japan resumed last summer. These will resume with due consideration of COVID-19 while taking sufficient preventive measures.

I will make continuous efforts for the CCL Japan as the WCO RCL to maintain its cooperative relationship with all the members in the region and will contribute to further enhancing the existing networks among Customs laboratory family members. Your continued support would be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,



ISHIDA Akihisa



New international team members at the RCL Japan (From the left: Ms. INOUE Mari (Head of Co-ordination of International Affairs Section), Mr. ISHIDA Akihisa (Director-General), Mr. WATASE Junji (Deputy Director-General), Mr. EGASHIRA Kai (Officer of Co-ordination of International Affairs Section))

< From Members >

- I am so pleased to work with the WCO Customs laboratory team. I would like to contribute to strengthening the network of Customs laboratories. (WATASE)
- I'd like to do my best in my new work at the international team at the CCL Japan. I hope to interact further with Customs laboratory members. (INOUE)
- This is my first time working at the CCL Japan. I'm looking forward to working with the team members of the Customs laboratories. (EGASHIRA)

2nd Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL)

From 18th to 20th April 2023, the CCL Japan hosted the 2nd Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratories (RCLs) in a hybrid format.

The concept of the RCL was firstly introduced in 2014 by Japan Customs, and since then the importance of Customs analysis has been recognized, with 10 RCLs established worldwide as of May 2022.

Since there are five RCLs in the A/P region, we expect to enhance the cooperation between RCLs in the field of customs analysis.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Norikazu KURAMOTO, Head of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P). About 30 participants attended either in-person or online, from RCLs, the WCO Secretariat, the Vice Chair Secretariat, and RILO A/P.

One of the main purposes of this meeting was sharing of information. The following are key items from the meeting;

- Updates on WCO activities and reference information for Customs analysis from the WCO Regional Development Manager, Vice Chair Secretariat of A/P, Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate of WCO, ROCB A/P and RILO A/P.
- Presentations by each RCL to share updates regarding their laboratories.

Each RCL has common goals as a central customs laboratory, however they have different responsibilities and systems. The

size of facilities and equipment are also different. Through Q&A and discussions, five RCLs exchanged views on the challenges and experiences in operating their own RCL.

- Sharing information on WCO Capacity Building Activities
- Sharing experiences of the WCO RCL Professionals Programme 2022/2023 from RCL Japan and RCL Korea together with the representatives of the trainees.
- Discussions between RCLs on ideas for how to further facilitate mutual cooperation to improve the quality of RCL activities
- A tour of the CCL Japan and Tokyo Customs (Local Customs Laboratory) facilities

Furthermore, representatives from the HS-Africa Programme attended the meeting as observers. They commented that they had a valuable opportunity to obtain up-to-date information on five RCLs in the A/P region, and that they want to refer to what they saw and learned for their future goals to establish RCL in their region. For RCLs in A/P region, their participation provided good opportunity for inter-regional cooperation to expand their capacity building activities.

This meeting provided a good platform for RCL to share good practices and foster deeper cooperation for the future.

The 3rd Meeting will be hosted by RCL Korea.

Issuance of the eighth volume of “Collection of Good Practices on Customs Chemical Analysis”

The RCL Japan annually collects good practices for Customs chemical analysis and disseminates them to the WCO A/P member administrations as part of its information sharing activities, named the “Collection of Good Practices on Customs Chemical Analysis.” The collections consist of valuable articles provided by WCO members on a voluntary basis.

The RCL Japan published the eighth volume of the “Collection of Good Practices on Customs Chemical Analysis” this June. As the first seven editions have covered a full range of analytical methods for the main target commodities, the eighth edition focuses on the analytical methods that each laboratory considers useful to share with other customs laboratories, including those in areas covered in previous volumes. Useful links to access further analytical methods or information are indicated so that readers can search necessary data. This volume also contains greetings from ROCB A/P and material from the five RCLs shared at the WCO A/P RCL heads' meeting in April. This may be helpful as it includes material on laboratory management and RCL activities.

We hope that you will find this edition useful together with the earlier editions. Please refer to WCO Member only Website at

<https://www.wcoomd.org/en.aspx>
or WCO Asia/Pacific Website at
<https://www.wcoasiapacific.org/>.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to inform you of this publication’s renaming from the next volume onwards. The next volume will be renamed to the “Collection of Good Practices on Customs Laboratory matters” and expand the scope of good practices to include “customs laboratory matters, including laboratory management”. This change aims to address the demands identified through our Capacity Building activities and to provide a valuable reference for Members when establishing or maintaining customs laboratories.

In order for the next volume to grow into a more effective edition, it would be highly appreciated if you could send your good practices and/or new topics for the next volume to us (cclmaile@mof.go.jp) at any time.

Finally, we would like to introduce some information about the analysis methods of Japan Customs, which you can refer to on our website at:

https://www.customs.go.jp/ccl_search/e_analysis_index.htm

Collection of Good Practices on Customs Analysis Vol. 8

<Contents>

I. Introduction

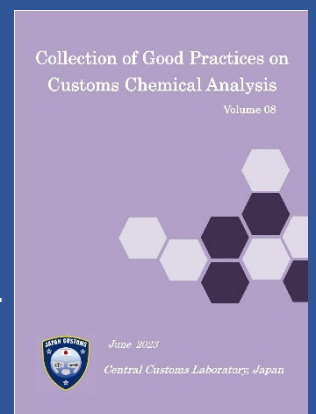
- Message from WCO A/P Vice-Chair, WCO and CCL Japan

II. Good Practices on Customs Chemical Analysis in the field of “Foodstuff, Base metals and Minerals, and Illicit drugs”

- From China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, CLEN, Italy, Peru, US, and India.

III. Information on the WCO RCLs in the Asia/Pacific region

- Message from the WCO ROCB A/P



Other activities ~first half of 2023~

The WCO Strategic Management and Intellectual Property Rights Program (SMIPRP)

On 16th February, the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) received 9 scholarship students in the WCO SMIPRP* under its customs technical cooperation activities. The CCL welcomed the students and presented the CCL's overview and activities as the Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) to support the WCO members in the region to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of their Customs Laboratory analysis work. In addition, the CCL provided demonstrations of analytical instruments and inspection equipment in the laboratory building.

* This one-year program is offered by the Graduate School of Business at Aoyama Gakuin University. The nationalities of the nine students are as follows: Botswana, Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Sudan, Zambia

The Workshop on Customs Laboratory for Tunisian Customs

From 6th to 7th June, the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) received 5 participants from Tunisian Customs for the workshop on Customs analysis, under its customs technical cooperation activities.

The CCL explained the infrastructure of Customs analysis such as the Legal framework, Organizational structure, Safety management, and Human resource management of Japan Customs Analysis to support the establishment of Tunisian Customs Laboratory.

The WCO Career Development Programme

On 8th June, the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) received 17 participants* as part of the WCO (World Customs Organization) Career Development Programme, under its customs technical cooperation activities. The CCL presented an overview and its activities as the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) to support the WCO members in the region. In addition, the CCL provided demonstrations of analytical instruments and inspection equipment in the laboratory building.

* Guinea-Bissau, Dominican Republic, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Algeria, Uganda, Gambia, Saint Lucia, Bangladesh, India, Armenia, Botswana, Ghana, Thailand, Vanuatu, Lebanon, Mexico

Workshop on Customs Laboratory Management for Malaysian Customs

From 14th to 16th June, the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) received 13 participants from Malaysian Customs as part of the JICA project on Customs analysis, under its customs technical cooperation activities. The CCL explained the infrastructure of Customs analysis such as the Legal framework, Organizational structure, Safety management, and Human resource management of Japan Customs Analysis to support the establishment of Malaysian Customs Laboratory.

Message from Mr. Osaki, JICA Expert in Malaysia

The contents of the workshop for Malaysian Customs were designed with Mr. Osaki, the Japan Customs officer who has been dispatched to the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) in Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur as a JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) expert since September 2021, for technical cooperation to establish Malaysian Customs Laboratory.

We would like to share the message from him.

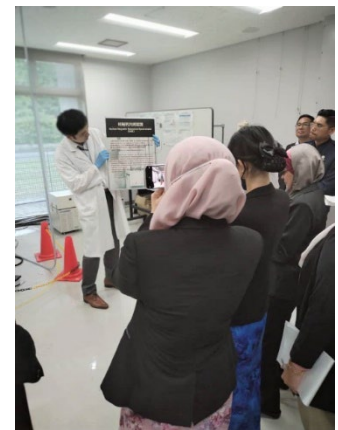
When I started to work in Malaysia, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was hard to arrange a workshop in Japan. Under this situation, I, on behalf of JICA, arranged a virtual site visit tour of the Japan Customs Laboratory to inform the layout of the Malaysian Customs laboratory in cooperation with the CCL Japan, and a WCO diagnostic mission at RMCD, conducted by CCF Japan, to discuss their analysis targets and relevant areas of analytical methodology, their infrastructure model, and action plans for the establishment of Malaysian Customs Laboratory.



During this time, JICA, in cooperation with Japan Customs, conducted a workshop on Customs Laboratory Management at the CCL Japan and Nagoya Customs from June 13 to 22, 2023 (six-day workshop). The workshop aimed to learn about the facilities of the Japan Customs Laboratory and the management framework of Customs analysis work in Japan to ensure proper and smooth Customs analysis operations for HS classification purposes in Malaysia.

Thirteen trainees including state customs officers who are expected to work at the new Malaysian Customs Laboratory as well as taskforce team members of RMCD, participated in the workshop.

In the first three days, the workshop at the CCL Japan included a country report from RMCD including the current progress and required future action for their Customs Lab project, a site visit tour of Laboratory area to observe the facilities of the Laboratory and analytical equipment related to their analysis targets, and lectures from CCL staff on the overall picture of Customs analysis infrastructure in Japan Customs, including framework and management of Customs analysis, development of Customs analysis methods, human resource development, etc.



Laboratory tour at CCL

And then, during the following three days, the participants visited Nagoya Customs HQ and the Seibu sub-branch to learn about the actual operations of Customs analysis in regional customs, especially about how to collaborate between the analysis section and other relevant sections for smooth operation of Customs analysis. On the visit tour of the Nagoya Customs laboratory, they tried simple analysis to measure the weight ratio of shrimp in food preparation (in relation to Note 2 of Chapter 16), and the experience of renovation plans for Nagoya Customs laboratory was also shared. And, during the onsite visit to the Seibu sub-branch, they also learned about sampling procedures and information sharing to find analysis samples at the import clearance stage.



Workshop at Nagoya Customs. Trainees tried the analysis of shrimp fries.



During the workshop, they developed a final report including a new Action Plan, and the report was presented on the last day of the workshop. In this report, the current issues for setting-up Malaysian Customs Laboratory were identified using a SWOT analysis after the contents of the workshop were organized into 4 pillars: “Establishment of Customs Lab” , “Operation of Customs Lab” , “Sustainability of Customs Lab” and “Creating Standard Analysis Method” , and finally a new Action Plan was organized.

I hope that the establishment of the Customs Laboratory in Malaysia will progress as planned, taking into account the new Action Plan. I, on behalf of JICA, look forward to our continued technical cooperation for RMCD with Japan Customs and other related organizations, and I would like to arrange the next workshop in Japan, focused on practical analysis training for their analysis targets.

I am very honored to conduct this long-awaited workshop in Japan with the cooperation of the CCL Japan and Japan Customs. The active participation of all participants in the WS was very impressive, including their many questions in each lecture and preparation of the final report in the meeting room of their dormitory until late every night. I am also glad to see that the participants also enjoyed Japanese culture by joining an authentic tea ceremony held by Nagoya Customs and exploring Tokyo and Nagoya city.



Finally, I would like to thank all of the staff from the CCL Japan, Nagoya Customs, Customs and Tariff Bureau in Japan, and JICA, for arranging this workshop.

Future Activities

- From 17 October to 30 November 2023, Attachment training at RCL Japan, RCL Korea and RCL India under the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme 2023/24.
- Contact point information to be updated on the website of the WCO Asia/Pacific Vice-Chair Secretariat.

RCL Brief welcomes readers' contributions which describe articles on Customs analysis-related matters, such as new analytical (or inspection device) technologies, latest news or topics on your Customs laboratory work, introduction to your Customs laboratory, challenges in drug enforcement, etc.

Please use the e-mail address "cclmaile@mof.go.jp" for submission.

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

Central Customs Laboratory, Ministry of Finance, Japan
6-3-5 Kashiwanoha, Kashiwa, Chiba 277-0882 JAPAN
Tel: +81-4-7135-0161 Fax: +81-4-7135-0164

