

# RCL JAPAN BRIEF

**VOL.23**

**Central Customs  
Laboratory, Japan**



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

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I once again write to you from the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) in Japan. We are pleased to present Vol. 23 of the RCL Brief.

Since the release of the last volume of this brief, the CCL has actively engaged in several important initiatives, including the WCO RCL Professionals Programme 2025/26. This fiscal year, we had the privilege of welcoming four distinguished chemists from the Customs administrations of Costa Rica, Kenya, Mongolia, and Papua New Guinea. The programme is designed to deepen their expertise in Customs laboratory operations, and we are proud to play a role in advancing the WCO's Capacity Building efforts. By supporting the development of technical skills in Customs analysis, we are honored to collaborate with these dedicated professionals, contributing to the growth of Customs capacities worldwide.



**TAKETSUGU Shuichi**  
**Director General of CCL Japan**

Over the course of six weeks, we had the privilege of collaborating closely with the trainees, exchanging profound insights and experiences. The programme reached its pinnacle with remarkable presentations from each participant, reflecting not only their newly acquired expertise but also their strategic vision for future initiatives upon returning to their respective Customs administrations. We are confident that this training will serve as a pivotal moment in their careers, laying the foundation for their continued contributions to Customs analysis and fortifying the invaluable partnerships between RCL Japan and the global Customs community.

The CCL also welcomed participants from the Customs authorities of Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, as well as trainees from the WCO and JICA training courses, providing them with a comprehensive overview of the CCL's operations and highlighting the critical role of Customs analysis to achieve the Customs missions.

Last August, the CCL Japan attended the 4th RCL Heads meeting held in Qingdao, China. We introduced the overview of the CCL Japan, the laboratory management procedure in Japan Customs and our experience on the WCO RCL Professionals Programme. I believe that networking and information sharing

among RCLs are crucial, as Customs chemical analysis demands a high level of expertise and experience. I am confident that the RCL Heads meeting plays a key role in enhancing the analytical capabilities of regional members.

To conclude, we remain fully committed to our mission and will continue to make every effort in collaboration with the WCO Secretariat, ROCB A/P, and members across the A/P region and beyond.  
Sincerely,

TAKETSUGU Shuichi

## WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme<sup>\*1</sup> 2025/26

This volume features an article contributed by a participant from our workshop with Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea.

As the WCO RCL, I remain committed to advancing CCL Japan's efforts to strengthen its collaborative ties with all regional members. I will continue working towards enhancing networks within the Customs laboratory community. Your ongoing support will be greatly valued.



Trainees of this programme

From the left:

Mr. Andrew Sengwa Noontiyiok (Kenya)

Ms. Maria Mayela Jimenez Cerdas (Costa Rica)

Mr. Napoleon Shedrick WALE (Papua New Guinea)

Mr. Ganbaatar Bolor (Mongolia)

<sup>\*1</sup> WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme

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

## **FROM Ms. Maria Mayela Jimenez Cerdas (Costa Rica Customs)**

The participation in the WCO/Japan Regional Customs Laboratory Programme 2025/2026, which included theoretical sessions at WCO HQ in Brussels, practical training in the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) in Japan, and visits to key Regional Customs facilities in Nagoya, significantly strengthened the analytical and strategic capabilities of the Costa Rica Customs Laboratory particularly in the field of chemical analysis for tariff classification purposes, thanks to a tailored work plan—carefully coordinated in advance by Japan Customs—focused on our priority needs.

The programme provided hands on experience with standardized analytical methodologies, including petroleum oil quantification, alcoholic strength determination, and the analysis of modified starches, polymers and drugs emphasizing the need for methodological rigor to avoid misclassification. Japanese laboratories also demonstrated exemplary practices aligned with international standards that enhance data integrity and operational efficiency. Visits to Nagoya Customs offered practical insight into how Japan integrates laboratory analysis, inspection procedures, and risk based controls, showing real time coordination between analytical results, inspections, and enforcement decisions. This highlighted the importance of structured procedures, advanced screening technologies, and effective communication between laboratory and operational units.



Beyond technical training, the programme illustrated the broader contribution of Regional Customs Laboratories -as Japan- to customs harmonization, enforcement, and global capacity building. Upon returning, I conducted a knowledge sharing session at the Costa Rica Customs Laboratory to present the main technical findings, supporting improvements in analytical practices and in the application of the General Interpretative Rules and Legal Notes.

I am grateful to the WCO, RCL Japan, and all instructors for this valuable professional experience, which reaffirmed the essential role of customs laboratories in accurate tariff classification, enforcement support, and facilitating compliant trade. Continued engagement in this programme remains key to strengthening technical capacity across WCO Members.

## **FROM Mr. Napoleon Shedrick WALE (Papua New Guinea)**

My experience of the WCO Regional Customs Professionals Programme in Japan CCL

The introductory week at WCO Headquarters in Brussels served as the foundational phase of a broader capacity-building journey. It covered mostly topics such as WCO & its Mission, the Need of Customs Laboratories, Harmonized System Convention, WCO Recommendations & Guidelines, General Interpretative Rules (GIRs), Classification of several products, to name a few. The sessions were led by mainly WCO experts and two guest lecturers from CLEN and OPCW, offering participants a unique opportunity to engage with global best practices and share insights from our respective national contexts. Participants left empowered to apply the enhanced skills and insights in our Customs administrations, contributing to more effective and science-driven customs operations worldwide.

At the Central Customs Laboratory (CCL) in Japan, I've undergone trainings on laboratory chemical analyses on selected topics which include: the Analysis of Petroleum Oils in Lubricating Oils; Analysis of Ores/Inorganic Substances; Analysis of Alloys; Quantification of Alcoholic Strength; Analysis of Surface-Active Agents; Analysis of fruit juice/sugars/honey; Analysis of Food Preparation (Milk Preparation); and the Analysis of Fat & Oil.



I am very impressed in how the CCL Japan have organized the trainings at the laboratory. My best learning experience at the Central Customs Laboratory was the analysis on the quantification of alcohols using the rum sample which I brought from my home country. I've come to truly appreciate the work of Customs Chemists in analyzing different samples using highly sophisticated instruments such as GC-MS, HPLC, NMR, LC-TOF-MS, etc. CCL Japan has the best laboratory management and safety procedures that offers the best learning environment for all participants of this important programme. All their staff were very friendly, supportive and experts in all areas of chemical analyses.

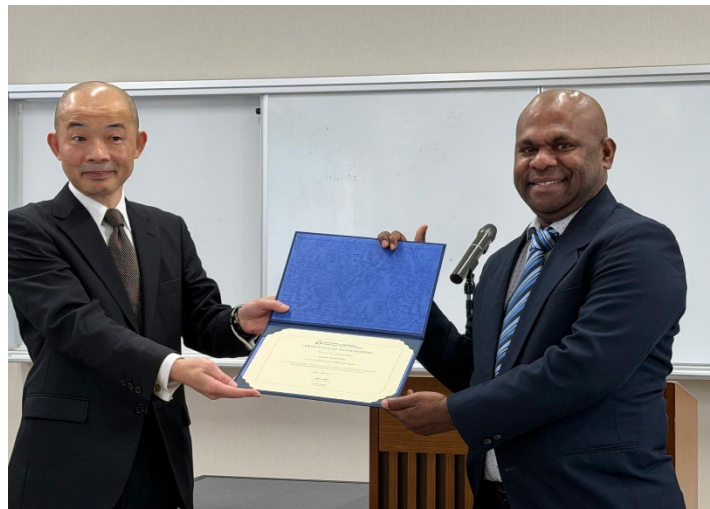


Apart from these practical trainings, we've also had site visits to the Nagoya Regional Customs Office. This trip was very special to me personally as we've visited the Nagoya Castle and the Prefecture on the day we arrived. On the following days we learnt about different sections of Nagoya Customs, starting from the laboratory, then to Chubu International Airport, Seaport Container Facility, covering important areas such as the clearance section, the roles of CIS and NACCS in facilitating trade, etc. We've also experienced the Japanese

cultures in Nagoya, something that I will never forget for the rest of my life.

I highly recommend this programme to other developing member countries to equip their customs chemists with the best knowledge on chemical analysis and HS Classification, because customs laboratory plays an important role in facilitation of legitimate trade, border security and collection of state revenues.

As the representative from the Papua New Guinea Customs Service, which currently operates without a dedicated customs laboratory, my participation in the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme 2025/2026 was not only an individual technical upskilling but a strategic decision towards building a National Customs Laboratory. I personally envisioned an accredited laboratory for my Customs administration and look forward



to working with Japan Customs (the regional & global leader in Customs matters) to make this dream a reality. Hence, as a first step we've requested to participate in the Laboratory Diagnostic Workshop in 2026 through the assistance of ROCB Asia/Pacific and the WCO Headquarters in Brussels.

## Attendance at the 4th Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) in Qingdao, China

From August 25 to 27, 2025, CCL Japan attended the 4th Meeting of Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Customs Laboratories (RCLs) in Qingdao, China. The meeting convened representatives from the heads of the RCLs of five countries, along with officials from WCO, RILO A/P, and ROCB A/P, to share best practices and experiences in Customs analysis and to further enhance regional cooperation. Additionally, the meeting featured a formal launch ceremony for the three new WCO Regional Entities in China, which included two RCLs and one RTC.



Great to meet Mr. Napoleon during the meeting.

CCL Japan contributed to the meeting by sharing our RCL activities and best practices as follows:

- Firstly, we provided an overview of our current RCL activities, which include our capacity-building programs, information-sharing initiatives in Customs analysis, and an introduction to CCL Japan.
- We shared our experience with the latest WCO RCL Professionals Programme, presenting the detailed training schedule and feedback from participants. Additionally, we highlighted some of the challenges encountered during the program.
- In the context of laboratory management, we outlined our efforts to ensure the quality of Customs analysis, including information sharing with relevant officers, sampling procedures, and safety management protocols for chemists.

This meeting served as an invaluable platform for the RCLs to exchange best practices and foster deeper, more meaningful cooperation for the future.

## Attendance at the 41st session of the WCO Scientific Sub-Committee

The Japanese delegates participated in the 41st session of the Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC/41)\*<sup>2</sup> held at the WCO headquarters in Brussels. The agenda items discussed included: the HS classification of goods on the INN list; amendments to the Explanatory Notes following the HS 2028 amendment; analysis methods for specific goods or products in Chapters I to VII of the HS nomenclature (e.g., chemical compounds, foodstuffs, etc.); and capacity-building activities regarding Customs laboratories. The Japanese delegates stated their views on several of these topics and reported on our capacity-building activities as WCO RCL.



The topics discussed at SSC/41 are posted on the members-only page of the WCO website:

[https://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/meeting-documents/scientific-sub-committee/41/ns0556e\\_html.html?lang=en](https://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/meeting-documents/scientific-sub-committee/41/ns0556e_html.html?lang=en)

\*2 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. SSC also serves as a forum for the Customs laboratory services of Council Members to exchange views.

## Other activities ~second half of 2025~

### **GRIPS WCO Scholarship Programme**

On September 26, the CCL received 11 participants\*<sup>3</sup> in the GRIPS WCO Scholarship Programme and International Training Programme for public officers, as part of an international activity under Customs technical cooperation. The CCL presented its 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 are studying in the Public Finance Program until September 2026 at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Japan.

\*<sup>3</sup> Customs officials of Argentina, Botswana, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon, Sri Lanka, and Tonga

### **JICA Customs Administration Course**

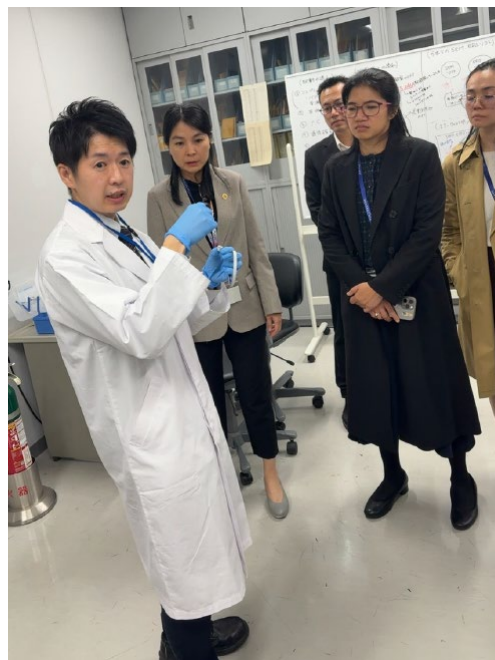


On October 10, the CCL received 16 participants\*<sup>4</sup> in the JICA Customs Administration Course, as part of an international activity under customs technical cooperation. The CCL explained its overview and the importance of Customs analysis, followed by demonstrations of analytical equipment and inspection equipment in the CCL laboratory building.

\*<sup>4</sup> Customs officials of Azerbaijan, Egypt, Malaysia, Maldives, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Republic of North Macedonia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

### **Workshop on HS classification for Cambodian Customs officials**

In November, the CCL received Cambodian Customs officials for a training program on HS Classification and Customs analysis. During the program, we welcomed the participants and provided an overview of both the CCL and Japan Customs. Additionally, we discussed strategies for identifying analysis needs related to HS classification in Cambodia, as part of the effort to establish the Cambodian Customs Analysis Laboratory.



### **Workshop on Customs Modernization**

#### **(Training Management) for Papua New Guinea Customs**

On December 3, the CCL received four participants for the workshop on Customs Modernization (Training Management) from Papua New Guinea Customs. The CCL introduced its overview and the importance of Customs analysis, followed by demonstrations of analytical equipment and inspection equipment in the CCL laboratory building.



## Future Activities

- From May 18 to June 12, 2026, Practical Training on Customs Chemical Analysis for Royal Malaysian Customs Department.
- From May 21 to May 22, 2026, Workshop on HS Classification and Customs analysis for Zambia Customs.
- From June 22 to June 26, 2026, Dispatching Experts for Practical Training on Customs Chemical Analysis for the Royal Malaysian Customs Department.
- Issuance of the 11th volume of “Collection of Good Practices on Customs Laboratory Matters”

\*\*\*\*\*  
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](mailto:cclmaile@mof.go.jp)” for submission.  
\*\*\*\*\*

*Please send your comments or questions to [cclmaile@mof.go.jp](mailto: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](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

