

Georgia, Europe's first nCEN



Customs crossing point, located on the border with the Russian Federation

In a modern globalized world, Customs services require efficient and convenient tools to capture seizure data, data which will enable to strengthen its risk management capacities. The Georgia Revenue Service (GRS), which gathers the Tax and Customs Administration and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Border Control Agency under the same roof, is no exception in this regard, and to do so more effectively, it decided to implement the National Customs Enforcement Network (nCEN) – an application developed by the WCO.

The application gives Customs administrations the ability to collect, store, analyse, and disseminate law enforcement information more efficiently at the national level, in order to establish robust intelligence capabilities, enhance profiling at the strategic, tactical and operational level, and boost information-sharing both regionally and internationally.



The nCEN consists of three independent databases. The principal database of national seizures and offences comprises data required for analysis, as well as means of conveyance, routes, and the possibility to view photos depicting exceptional concealment methods. Two supplementary databases contain information on suspect persons, methods of conveyance, and business entities of interest to Customs, thereby facilitating a structured investigation process.

After some preparatory work and negotiations, the decision to implement the nCEN was officially taken in 2014 and an agreement was signed with the WCO in January 2015, making Georgia the first country in the WCO Europe region to implement the tool. The GRS provided the hardware necessary for the installation and took care of the language adaptation of the application – the translation was undertaken by a special group of Customs analysts and information technology (IT) experts. The software, and company cases). Once data is entered, it is validated by system administrators located at the GRS. Among other things, these administrators are responsible for:

- ensuring general communication and information flow between nCEN users and Customs' headquarters;
- validating cases (data quality checks);
- managing the application user database (creation of new users, deactivation of users, users' role and functions management, and password resets);

- transmitting non-nominal components of their data to the global WCO Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) database (the transfer is made with a click of a button).

During more than 7 years of utilization, the GRS has regularly provided positive feedback on the nCEN. The application has 49 active users, and has proved to be a powerful platform for capturing data on seizures, suspects and companies. Seizures at each border crossing point, at Customs clearance zones, and as a part of the CCP are reported into the system. As of 1st of June 2023, 1895 seizures and 243 company cases have been reported into the system.

Users deem the application to be user-friendly, and the in-built mail system, known as the Information Communication Interface (Icomm), enables smooth and efficient information flow among users and external “connected” parties, such as the WCO for sending seizure information to the Global CEN database or other countries using the nCEN application.

The captured information is regularly analyzed and consulted by risk analysts based at the GRS Headquarters, as well as by Customs officers in the field. Data is used to create risk profiles and/or to modify existing ones. Analyzing and cross-referencing data on concealment methods, type of declared goods, routes, offenders, nationalities or transport means registration countries, for example, has proven to be efficient as Georgia Customs has seen an increase in the amount of seizures made in recent years.

The GRS will be pleased to share more about its nCEN implementation experience with any countries interested in knowing more about the tool, and what the implementation required.

In addition, two GRS officers have enrolled in the nCEN trainer accreditation programme, and are now at the disposal of the WCO to assist other administrations in implementing the application.

More information: www.rs.ge customs@rs.ge