



ASIA/PACIFIC CUSTOMS NEWS

Volume #68



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Customs News
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WCO Asia/Pacific
Regional Vice-Chair

Operation JARDENA

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- Trusted Insiders

IN FOCUS

Emerging Container
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**The 32nd Asia/Pacific
Regional Contact Points
Brisbane, Australia 2022**

SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRITY

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ASIA/PACIFIC CUSTOMS NEWS

Volume #68 March/April 2023

SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRITY

EDITORIAL

Kimberlee Stamatis

Publisher / Secretariat

Nadine Menzel

Editor-in-Chief

Marivi Martin

Managing Editor

Adriana Rajic

Art Director

Simon Harris

Creative Director

Adam Feldman

Senior Copy Editor

Janayah Orchard

Copy Editor

CONTACT



apvc-wco@abf.gov.au



www.wcoasiapacific.org



[@wcoasiapacific](https://www.instagram.com/wcoasiapacific)

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Message from the Secretariat for the Office of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair

Ms Kimberlee Stamatis

Assistant Secretary, Customs and Trade Policy Branch, Customs Division Australian Border Force

Dear WCO Asia/Pacific Colleagues,



*Kimberlee Stamatis,
Assistant Secretary,
Customs and Trade Policy
Australian Border Force (ABF)*

Welcome to Volume #68 of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia/Pacific Customs News, highlighting the key events from across the whole Region from October 2022 to March 2023. It has been a very busy period for the Region and, with the return of in-person meetings, it has been lovely to once again see familiar faces and meet new friends as we continue to work together in building Customs connections across the Asia/Pacific.

This is our second issue as Asia/Pacific Vice-Chair and the first for 2023. The theme for Volume #68 focuses on '*Supply Chain Integrity*' and it has been released to reflect increased emphasis on enforcement matters, including those recently discussed at the 43rd Session of Enforcement Committee, 27-31 March.

Supply Chain Integrity refers to the process of ensuring that products are produced, transported, and delivered to their final destination in a safe and ethical manner. This includes ensuring that all parties involved in the Supply Chain follow proper procedures and adhere to regulations. Supply Chain Integrity is an important issue across the Asia/Pacific Region as it is a major hub for exporting and transiting goods.

At the 32nd Regional Contact Points meeting held in Brisbane, Australia in November 2022, delegates participated in a desktop exercise on Supply Chain Integrity that was led by Australian Border Force (ABF) Officers from Operation JARDENA. It was interesting to hear the different strategies we, as a Region, employ to respond to the challenges we face across the border continuum. Through this exercise we showcased the different approaches and underscored the importance of international collaboration in ensuring the control and security of our borders.

The team and I are very grateful for the many articles submitted for this issue. It is a testament to the wonderful work that we are doing collectively as a Region. And so, I hope you enjoy this issue as much as you enjoyed Volume #67.

Keep up to date with Asia/Pacific regional news by checking out our website at wcoasiapacific.org and follow our official Instagram page [@wcoasiapacific](https://www.instagram.com/wcoasiapacific).

Message from the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair

Mr Michael Outram APM

Australian Border Force (ABF) Commissioner and Comptroller-General of Customs

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the March/April issue of the Asia/Pacific Customs News Volume #68 – Supply Chain Integrity. In June 2022, I made an intervention in my capacity as ABF Commissioner and Comptroller-General of Customs at the 139th / 140th session of WCO Council to announce Australia's support for a Global Supply Chain Integrity Project. I am committed to combating criminal infiltration of the Supply Chain. Supply Chain Integrity is a critical issue for the Asia/Pacific Region and we, as Customs officers, play a key role in safeguarding the Region's borders and protecting our communities from potential threats.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to ensure Supply Chains are secure, resilient, transparent, and reliable, given the increasing complexity and globalisation of trade and commerce. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how fragile these Supply Chains can be and exposed gaps and vulnerabilities that Customs administrations can mitigate through collaboration.

In Australia, the ABF has a crucial role to play in promoting Supply Chain Integrity, as it is responsible for overseeing the movement of goods and people across Australia's borders. This includes monitoring and assessing the risks associated with the import and export of goods, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, facilitating and streamlining cross-border movement, and detecting and disrupting any attempts to smuggle prohibited or dangerous items. One of the key challenges facing the ABF in promoting Supply Chain Integrity is the increasing sophistication and diversity of threats it faces. Criminals and other malicious actors are constantly seeking new ways to exploit vulnerabilities in the Supply Chain, such as using hidden compartments in shipping containers, falsifying documents or fraudulent identities, or using a complex network of intermediaries and third-party suppliers to obscure the true origin and destination of goods. To address these challenges, the ABF has adopted a multi-layered approach to Supply Chain Integrity, which includes a range of measures designed to detect and deter potential risks.

This issue of the Asia/Pacific Customs News explores the Asia/Pacific Region's multifaceted approach to Supply Chain Integrity and reiterates the importance of Customs in maintaining the security and integrity of our borders, while also facilitating trade and commerce in a way that benefits the economy and society as a whole. By working collaboratively with stakeholders, including governments, industry, other institutions and civil society, and deploying a range of advanced technologies and techniques, we are well placed to address the complex, dynamic and evolving threats facing the Supply Chain. This positioning will ensure that the Asia/Pacific – one of the most diverse and dynamic Regions for trade – remains a safe and secure place to do business.



*ABF Commissioner and
Comptroller-General Customs,
Michael Outram APM,
**WCO Asia/Pacific Regional
Vice-Chair for 2022-2024***

Message from the WCO Director of Compliance and Facilitation

Mr Pranab Kumar Das

Mr Das assumed charge as Director, Compliance and Facilitation Directorate of the WCO in January 2020

Mr Das has brought rich experience into the role of Director, Compliance and Facilitation from his over 36 years in Customs and Indirect Tax Administration across various positions, from the frontline and specialised directorates of Customs and Indirect Taxes in India, to becoming Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) within the Government of India. Mr Das has also served as Special Director, Directorate of Enforcement, within India's nodal agency for Prevention of Money Laundering.

Dear WCO Asia/Pacific Colleagues,

We are all acutely aware that the trade environment is only growing more complex given the emergence of e-commerce and new platforms for buying and selling. Coupled with these risks, maritime Supply Chains have become a major vector for global criminal syndicates moving large volumes of drugs and contraband out of source countries into trading counties across national borders.

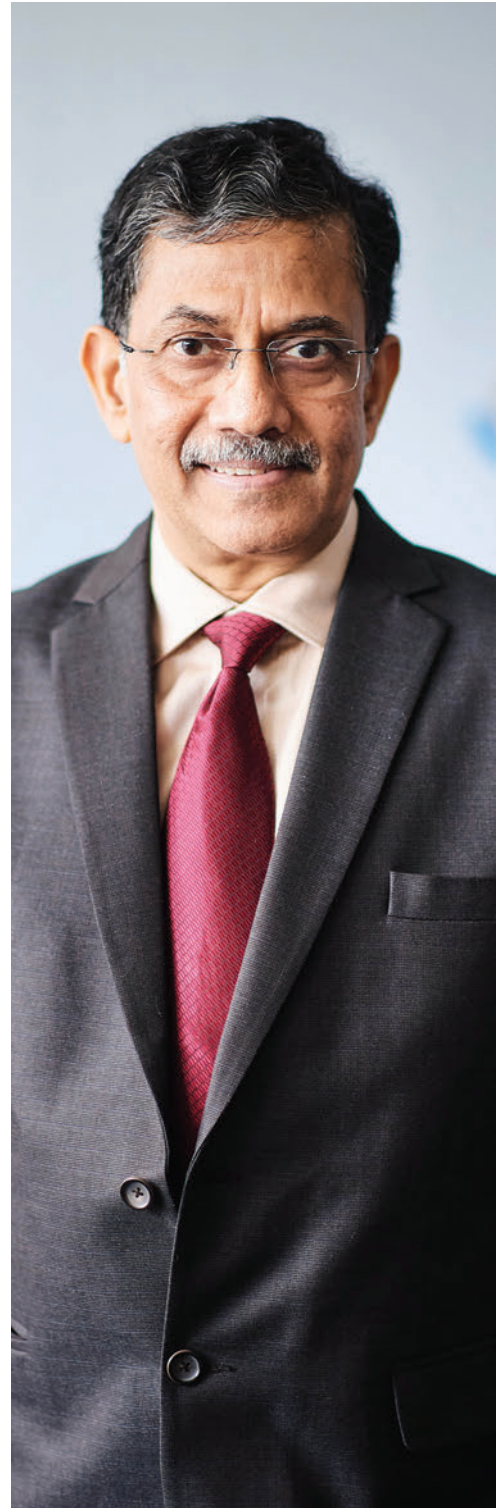
Customs administrations are aware that a key enabler is the use of corrupt insiders within the Supply Chain posing as legitimate workers, exploiting their positions of trust to enable criminal infiltration.

Fortunately, we have determined and dedicated Customs officers that closely monitor their borders to ensure the ongoing integrity of Supply Chains. The WCO will continue to look for new ways to support them.

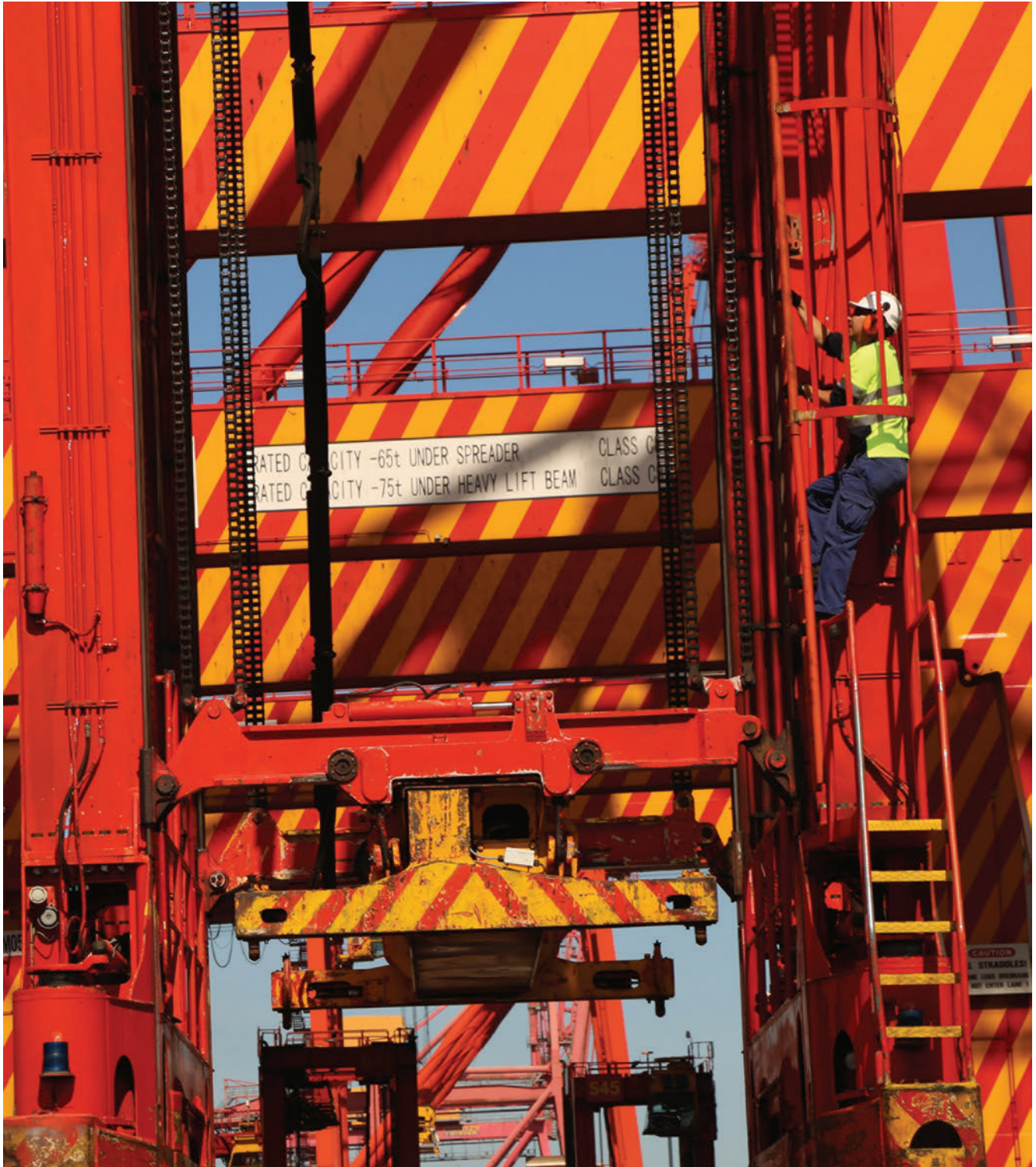
Building resilient global Supply Chains is what will help maintain customs integrity. The WCO is integral to help maintain customs integrity including the integrity of our Supply Chains.

Recent global operations, like Operation TIN CAN that specifically targeted insider threats, have demonstrated that our respective law enforcement agencies benefit greatly from information sharing and collaboration. Leveraging this experience, we must do all we can to support Customs agencies to work together to strengthen our borders.

For this issue of the Asia/Pacific Customs News, I welcome the focus on ways we can work together to combat the threat of criminal infiltration in our Supply Chains and ways to keep WCO Members' Supply Chains resilient.



SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRITY



Operation JARDENA

Our countries are dependent on well-regulated and efficient maritime and aviation Supply Chains; the imperative to protect them adequately from criminal exploitation is a key, enduring task

*Written by
Antony Pollock
ABF Superintendent,
Operation JARDENA*

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*



The Australian Border Force (ABF) regulates the movement of goods across the border, optimising legitimate travel and trade and preventing the movement of prohibited or restricted goods and the evasion of revenue. The integrity of Australia's Supply Chain is vital to ensuring its prosperity, security and safety.

The ABF is enhancing Australia's Supply Chain Integrity through Operation JARDENA, which leverages the ABF and partner agencies' full operational, regulatory and enforcement capabilities.

In June 2021, through the Australian Federal Police (AFP) Special Operation IRONSIDE, it was confirmed that criminal infiltration within air and sea

Supply Chains had reached a scale of growing concern. Information shared by various partners indicated that the level of criminality in the Supply Chain is at a critical level. Intelligence and enforcement capabilities are leading to more illicit goods being seized in the hands of trusted insiders (internal conspirators) than they are in conventional settings, such as concealments in cargo or in the baggage of air passengers.

Operation JARDENA's immediate focus is on strategic strikes against key vulnerabilities in our seaports, airports and international mail gateways, including trusted insiders, high threat entities and vulnerabilities in the control framework. Trusted insiders who work directly in Supply Chain domains have
(Continued on page 10)

CASE STUDY

**A case study of trusted insiders (internal conspirators in trusted positions) -
Airport ground crew involved in drug smuggling at Sydney International Airport, Australia, in 2019**

In March 2019, a baggage handler at Sydney International Airport was observed entering the rear of a passenger aircraft that had recently arrived from Vancouver, Canada. The baggage handler exited the aircraft a short time later carrying two bags.

The baggage handler placed the bags on his tow tug vehicle and drove the bags to the Sydney domestic terminal and placed the bags onto a carousel.

The bags were then collected by another individual in the baggage collection area of domestic terminal. The individual was intercepted by police and the bags were found to contain 38 kilograms of methamphetamine. Both the baggage handler and individual were arrested and charged by police.

Border Vulnerability and Criminal Methodology

The airside environment is vulnerable to criminal infiltration due to the number of persons employed in the industry and access to international aircraft. Often, ground crew will access an aircraft before the Australian Border Force (ABF). The ABF has a limited presence airside, with most resources consumed by processing departing and arriving passengers within the terminal.

In this instance, the baggage handler attempted to exploit the level of access he had to international aircraft and the liberty given to

ground crew generally to move freely between the international and domestic airside terminals.

This methodology is employed by criminal syndicates as it circumvents any cargo reporting requirements, avoids ABF screening of baggage within the international terminal and, due to the number of aircraft arriving in Australia daily, is repeatable on a more frequent and wider scale.

Hardening the Border

International airport terminals hire thousands of employees to provide services such as unloading and loading of aircraft, catering and maintenance. The nature of employment is incrementally becoming more transient, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Strong background checks are necessary to exclude unsuitable individuals from working within the airside environment. Industry needs to be supported to safeguard their businesses from criminal infiltration through lax hiring processes.

A permanent visible uniformed presence airside acts as a strong deterrent to unlawful activity. Supported by adequate closed circuit television (CCTV) and appropriate physical security arrangements for international terminals, proper ABF airside coverage would reduce the likelihood of further instances of criminal exploitation.

*Written by
Jack McGrath,
ABF Superintendent,
Operation JARDENA, ABF*

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*

Operation JARDENA

(Continued from page 8)

access to restricted areas and systems, possess an intimate knowledge of border clearance processes and understand the vulnerabilities of our Supply Chains and how to exploit them. Trusted insiders can include employees working for licensed depots and warehouses, customs brokers, shipping companies, airlines, freight forwarders, transport companies and stevedores. Trusted insiders with links to serious and organised crime pose an insidious and ongoing threat to Australia's Supply Chain.

Why it Matters

Our Region is dependent on well-regulated and efficient maritime and aviation Supply Chains; the imperative to protect them adequately from criminal exploitation is a key, enduring task.

Without Supply Chain Integrity, Supply Chains become major vectors for illicit contraband and a chief catalyst for corruption – undermining the orderly, regulated and safe passage of goods and services upon which millions of people depend.

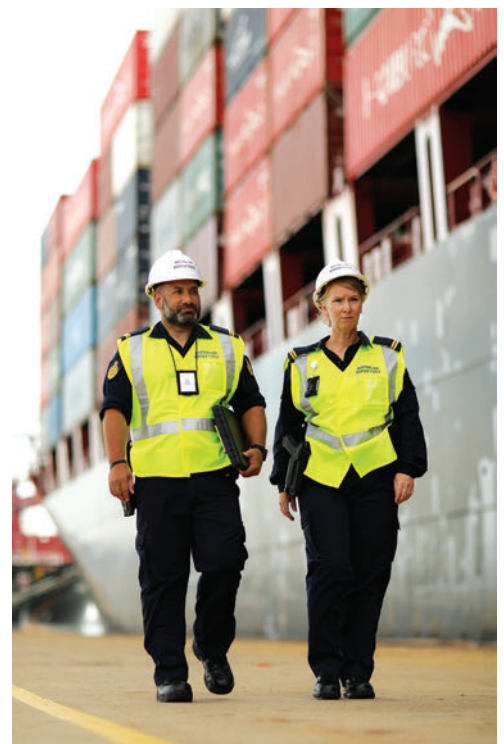
From the Australian perspective, poor Supply Chain Integrity is also an acute issue of national sovereignty; borders through which large amounts of contraband and people covertly flow represents a loss of state control over its own territory.

Secure Supply Chains are therefore a foundational prerequisite of sovereign wellbeing; it is an issue of sovereign risk – with accompanying security, defence, economic, cohesive, and

societal implications – as much as it is a law enforcement or regulatory issue of smuggling of illicit commodities and unlawful non-citizens.

Given the transnational nature of criminal syndicates targeting global Supply Chains and obvious commonalities in how they exploit them to move contraband across international borders, multilateral cooperation, coordination and sharing of data is an increasingly necessary means of successfully combating criminality in global Supply Chains.

As a champion of Supply Chain Integrity, the ABF looks to cooperate with global law enforcement and border agency partners to disrupt and dismantle criminality wherever it appears.



CASE STUDY

Collaboration between international counterparts helps Hong Kong Customs and Excise (HKCE) take down drug cartels with a record-breaking 1.9 tons combined of methamphetamine in Hong Kong, China

The drug problem knows no bounds. Its menace not only destroys individual human lives but also poses a serious threat to national security across the world. Notwithstanding the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past few years, the discovery of increasingly larger shipments of illicit drugs, in both overland and seaborne routes, demonstrates the traffickers' adaptability to volatile environments and circumstances.

Under these circumstances, close collaboration and cooperation among law enforcement agencies are pivotal in tackling this threat. In October 2022, from intelligence exchange with the Australian Border Force and Australian Federal Police, Hong Kong Customs and Excise (HKCE) successfully identified an airborne consignment declared to contain three numbers of transformers destined for Australia via Hong Kong, China. A total of 76 kilograms of methamphetamine were found concealed inside the hollow space of the transformers. In late October, a follow-up investigation unveiled another suspicious seaborne consignment from Mexico to Australia via Hong Kong, China. It was declared to contain six pallets of coconut water. After cargo examination, officers uncovered a record-breaking 1.8 tons shipment of high-purity liquid methamphetamine. The two cases totalled 1.9 tons of methamphetamine, worth an estimated street-value of more than HKD1.1 billion.

In terms of the seizure amount and market value, this was the largest haul discovered by Hong Kong law enforcement agencies in its history. Accordingly, this has not only dealt a severe blow to the drug cartels but also demonstrated to the community HKCE's firm commitment to combating drug trafficking in Hong Kong, China and more broadly in the Region.

Submitted by the Office of Customs Affairs and Co-operation, Hong Kong Customs and Excise (HKCE), Hong Kong, China

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*



In October 2022, upon intelligence exchange, HKCE uncovered 76kg of methamphetamine from an airborne consignment declared to contain three transformers originating from Mexico to Australia via Hong Kong, China.



Under the same joint-operation with Australian counterparts, a suspicious seaborne consignment to Australia via Hong Kong, China was identified. The consignment, declared to contain six pallets of coconut water, was intercepted by HKCE with a record-breaking 1.8t liquid methamphetamine seized.

The success of the operations also reminds us of the importance of close collaboration and cooperation of law enforcement agencies on the timely exchange of information and conduct of joint operations.

Operation TIN CAN

Operation TIN CAN was an international multi-regional operation led by the WCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the strategic objective of enhancing cooperation with industry

Submitted by
ABF Brussels

/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director



In December 2022, Australian Border Force (ABF) officers, alongside a United Kingdom (UK) Border Force officer, briefed the WCO Secretary General Dr Kunio Mikuriya at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels on potential 'rips' (illicit activity to place or remove contraband) in containerised sea cargo.

WCO Deputy Director Stefan Kirsch, who also attended the briefing with Dr Mikuriya, commented that "the information we captured through TIN CAN has the potential to change the way we combat rips and criminal infiltration of the Supply Chain."

Operation TIN CAN was an international multi-regional operation led by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the strategic objective of enhancing cooperation with industry. The operation execution phase, including an industry soft start and close, took place between 4 November and 14 December 2022.

The operation looked to enhance cooperation with all operators in the Supply Chain including Customs agencies, ports, law enforcement, and shipping lines. There were 58 participating countries involved, five shipping lines, and Customs officers

embedded in both the Operational Coordination Unit (OCU) in Brussels as well as key participating ports.

TIN CAN focused on targeting cocaine trafficking using the rip methodology, involving criminal infiltration of the Supply Chain whereby internal conspirators facilitate the access and movement of illicit goods from the departure country, through transit countries, to the final destination.

To support the operation, shipping lines pre-positioned shipping containers enabled with smart devices to high-risk ports throughout Latin America.

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IN FOCUS

Operation TIN CAN showed that a controlled and managed operational environment to test emerging container security technology benefits both Customs administrations and industry

The intent of Operation TIN CAN was to gain a greater understanding of industry technology and the evolution of smart container capabilities and e-seals.

Vapour Detection Technology

A Customs officer embedded in the TIN CAN OCU observed a successful trial of a vapour detection technology alongside a participating Customs administration. The non-intrusive inspection vapour detection technology detects air particles contaminated by illicit substances. The technology is not limited to sea cargo and can be employed in various frontline operating environments.

The first test was conducted on a container from high-risk port containing Cassava. The x-ray image showed no anomalies but due to risk indicators, the container was tested with the vapour detection equipment. Roughly 44 kilograms of concealed cocaine was uncovered. The technology is promising and could be utilised to assess a high volume of containers and refer those with a positive result to a Container Examination Facility (CEF) for a more detailed inspection.

Smart Containers

Industry continues to develop technologies to improve container security. One company has developed a device that can be placed on shipping containers, turning them into 'smart containers'.

The device tested during TIN CAN uses GPS location data along with light and motion sensors to detect container tampering to improve Supply Chain

and asset management. This smart container device was initially created to provide visibility of containers – an advanced track and trace capability. The capability has evolved into an advanced security measure to monitor unauthorised access to containers.

Smart Seal Technology

Similar to the container integrity technology, industry have developed electronic smart seal technologies that can detect both seal tampering and container door openings via a specially designed latch mechanism that transmits alerts. An OCU Customs officer observed a trial of this technology during Operation TIN CAN and noted its accuracy. The technology could confirm when a seal was removed from the latch of a container, regardless of whether the door was opened or not. This type of technology may be an effective alternative to relying on manual assessment of seal integrity.

Radio-Frequency Identification Seals

Radio-Frequency Identification Seals (RFIDs) were used in TIN CAN on the containers of participating countries. These RFID seals appear as regular bolt seals with the RFID embedded within (non-visible). A purpose-built mobile application is used to scan the Quick Response (QR) code of the seal, to confirm validation of the seal. This type of seal has been developed to eliminate the possibility of cloned seals which are often used by criminal groups using the RIP methodology. It is expected that with a simple QR code, authorities can verify the legitimacy of a seal and quickly discount the threat of a rip.

*Submitted by
Operation JARDENA, ABF*

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*

**Note: These examples
illustrate the benefits of
cooperation and do not
necessarily advocate for any
particular technology.*

Operation TIN CAN

(Continued from page 12)



Operation TIN CAN highlighted how critical cooperation with industry is for effective control of Supply Chains.

The OCU then managed alerts from industry on containers that had signs of tampering – a strong indicator of unauthorised access (a rip).

Industry cooperation is not new to Customs administrations, or the WCO. There have been a number of successful operations that have included the private sector. TIN CAN continued the strong engagement between the WCO, Customs administrations and Industry, providing another platform for industry and Customs administrations to work together on a compliance and enforcement activity.

TIN CAN also highlighted the limited effectiveness of current standard traditional container seals in stopping interference and contamination of sea cargo containers. The demonstration of emerging technology, such as the container intrusion technology and smart seals, trialled during TIN CAN could contribute towards setting new global international industry standards related to the integrity of containerised cargo and hardening the Supply Chain from criminal infiltration.

TIN CAN was a successful operation. The OCU will provide a post-analysis report to WCO Members at the 40th Enforcement Committee meeting.

CASE STUDY

Strengthening international collaboration to combat crime syndicates illicit tobacco smuggling –
Transnational organised crime syndicates look for weak and vulnerable targets to exploit to advance their criminal activities. In a world heavily dependent on trade, the global Supply Chain is a natural target



The exploitation of Supply Chains is not limited to any particular commodity, but in Australia, The United Kingdom (UK), Europe and Southeast Asia, more and more organised crime syndicates are known to be operating within Supply Chains to smuggle illicit tobacco. The challenge of addressing criminality in the Supply Chain is not unique to any one Customs administration. Indeed, large seizures of illicit tobacco are becoming increasingly prevalent at borders globally, highlighting the far-reaching international compromise of global Supply Chains.

Illicit tobacco is tobacco that has been cultivated, produced, manufactured, imported, exported, purchased, sold,

or possessed in a manner that does not comply with relevant legislative requirements. This includes where duties and taxes have not been paid, or where health standards, copyright and trademark laws have been breached.

Organised crime syndicates are profiting enormously from the sale and distribution of illicit tobacco in both Australia and the UK. The proceeds of these activities are used to fund other criminal enterprises, including the importations of narcotics and other synthetic drugs. The illicit tobacco market also has significant impacts on legitimate businesses, who are undercut by criminals selling illicit tobacco products at cheaper prices.

*Submitted by the ABF,
Singapore Customs and
Her Majesty's Royal Customs*

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*

Syndicates are known to use many different methods to smuggle illicit tobacco across borders. Tobacco smuggling is being detected through all streams including mail, air and sea cargo, and are even being carried in large personal shipments by travellers. Shipments of illicit tobacco occur via containerised cargo, concealed using a variety of methods relying on Supply Chain insiders including the re-cutting of bills of lading, lodgment of false declarations and use of cover loads.

Cooperation within the global customs community is now more important than ever to address the global challenge of criminals infiltrating the Supply Chain in order to move illicit tobacco across our borders, and the damaging impacts on our communities.

In recognition of the shared threat illicit tobacco crime syndicates pose to Australia, the UK and Singapore, it was identified that there were opportunities for closer collaboration between customs authorities to mitigate these threats.

Closer collaboration between Australia, the UK and Singapore includes:

- the sharing of information and intelligence on suspicious shipments to combat smuggling of illicit tobacco
- disruption of illicit tobacco flows through detections, seizures, investigations and prosecutions, and
- filling intelligence gaps on organised crime syndicates involved in illicit tobacco smuggling to inform profiling and targeting outcomes.

Singapore Customs provided 17 referrals to Australia, leading to seizures of over 100 million sticks of cigarettes. Similarly, Singapore Customs provided 12 referrals to Her Majesties Royal Customs (HMRC), the UK leading to seizures of millions of cigarette sticks.

The success of this closer collaboration has resulted in improved Supply Chain Integrity; counteracting against threat actors who seek to undermine the orderly, regulated, and safe passage of goods and services upon which our economy and society depends.

Secure Supply Chains are a foundational prerequisite of sovereign wellbeing; mitigating the risk of threat actors and upholding the strong reputation of mitigating these risks are critical to maximising the economic outcomes of trade facilitation and modernisation.

As champions of Supply Chain Integrity and cooperation, the Australian Border Force (ABF), HMRC and Singapore Customs will continue to work collaboratively to combat illicit tobacco smuggling.

The Australian Border Force (ABF)

is Australia's frontline border law enforcement agency and customs service. The ABF's mission is to protect Australia's border and enable legitimate trade and travel. The ABF's vision is to be a global leader in border law enforcement and a trusted partner that helps build a safe, secure and prosperous Australia.

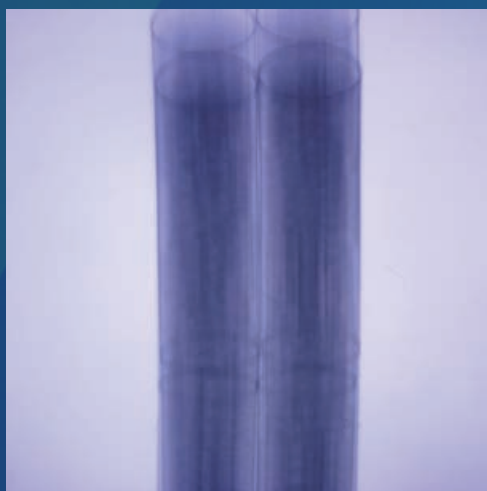
Singapore Customs is the lead agency for trade facilitation and revenue enforcement. Singapore Customs facilitates trade, through collaboration with government agencies and businesses, robust regulations and effective enforcement. Singapore Customs' vision is to be a leading Customs agency that advances Singapore's economy by protecting revenue, and making trade easy, fair and secure.

His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)

is the UK's tax, payments and customs authority. HMRC helps the majority of the honest to get their tax right and make it hard for the minority of the dishonest to cheat the system.



Images of illicit tobacco smuggling shipments from international Customs cooperation between the ABF, Singapore Customs and HMRC



Modern Customs Control and Global Supply Chain Management

The role of Customs administrations in global Supply Chain management and how digitisation, risk management and customs cooperation can ensure Supply Chain Integrity without compromising facilitation of international cargo movement

*Written by Wazim Mustafa,
Deputy Director DRI Guwahat,
Central Board of Indirect Taxes
and Customs (CBIC), India*

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*



The world is now connected more than ever before. Globalisation offers companies the opportunity to offer their products far and wide in reach of new markets. A manufacturer who is based in India can find potential market in Europe or Africa. Supply Chain Integrity refers to the ability to maintain the consistency, accuracy, and reliability of information and materials as they move through the various stages of a Supply Chain. This includes ensuring that products are not counterfeit, that they are of the expected quality and quantity, and that they are transported and stored in a safe and secure manner.

Being the guardians of economic frontiers of a country, the role of Customs in ensuring Supply Chain Integrity is invaluable. The traditional customs control approach, which is dependent on the declaration submitted by an importer, often through an intermediary, may not fully satisfy the integrity check from a risk management perspective. While such a declaration can guide Customs officers to perform preliminary checks, it cannot

give the background or history of an item or the risks attached to it. And if an officer decides to proceed with a thorough inspection of the cargo, this can impact on the efficiency of Supply Chains, delaying the cargo. This encapsulates why risk management is now at the heart of modern Customs control and law enforcement.

Risk management enables Customs administrations to exercise adequate controls with minimum hindrance to legitimate trade. But any risk management system is as good as the quality of the data that is input into the system, so that targeted interventions can be undertaken, either at the assessment stage or at the examination stage, to ensure that goods are intact and in accordance with what has been declared. A strong and reliable database throughout the Supply Chain, both historical and in real time, can assist the process of risk management, minimising the risk attached with cargo.

To ensure a seamless flow of data, cooperation among Customs



Images: Indian Customs official affixing e-seals based on blockchain technology on containers for port-to-warehouse or warehouse-to-warehouse movement of containerised cargo.

administrations throughout the global Supply Chain is essential. A parallel flow of real time information along with the movement of international cargo can be a game changer in terms of data access and analysis for meeting organisational goals more effectively. For example, a truck carrying export goods from Bangladesh was transferred to an Indian truck at the border and was e-sealed under Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS). The cargo was then facilitated by Indian Customs and flown to its destination. This modeling has not only ensured the integrity of the Supply Chain but also shown benefits when Customs administrations work collaboratively.

Although digitalisation has reduced the physical intervention of personnel and resources along different stages of the Supply Chain Management, an

efficient global Supply Chain requires highly trained and motivated staff in the Customs administrations as well as all other stakeholders involved in the Supply Chain.

Leveraging block chain technology for end-to-end encryption of data can plug the issue of data breach at any stage and ensure the integrity of data being transferred. This technology among other developments heralds great potential in furthering efforts to minimise the impacts of risk management on the Supply Chain.

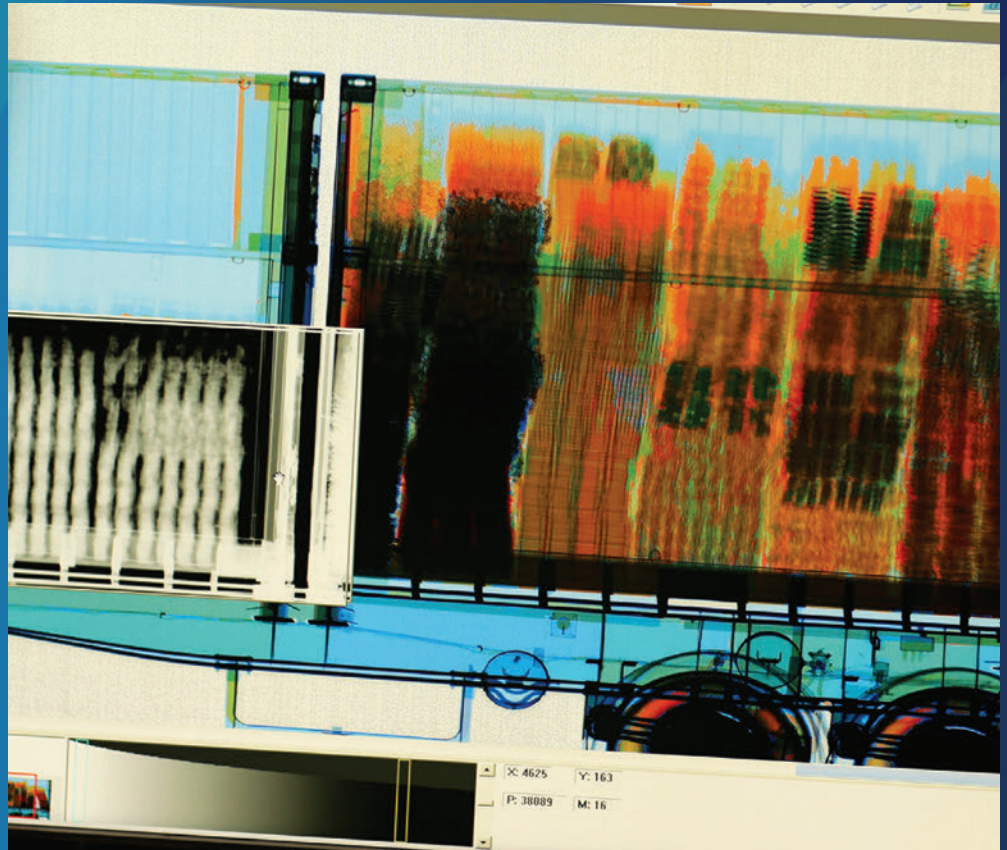
CASE STUDY

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) of India's Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) busts an international syndicate involved in the smuggling of hazardous chemicals

Written by
Dr Sandeep Gunjal,
Deputy Director, Directorate of
Revenue Intelligence (DRI),
Central Board of Indirect Taxes
and Customs (CBIC), India

/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director

Image of container cargo
x-ray screening and results
of computer analysis



The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the intelligence wing of India's Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), developed intelligence regarding smuggling of hazardous chemicals, including Chlorantraniliprole and Emamectin Benzoate through Nhava Sheva Port of India. The consignments originated in East Asia and were misdeclared as Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer.

In a swift operation carried out in late-December 2022, five consignments were identified carrying 25 metric tons (mt) of Chlorantraniliprole and 5 mt of Emamectin Benzoate. The

value of these hazardous goods on the international market is about USD2.1 million whereas the value declared to CBIC was well below at only USD60,000.

The investigation revealed that this syndicate had smuggled more than 500 mt of such hazardous chemicals into India since January 2017. The agency also noticed that the documents submitted along with the import declaration including Invoice, Packing List, Country of Origin (CoO) Certificate, Chemical Examination Report, etc., were all fake and fraudulently created by the syndicate

for the purpose of smuggling restricted goods into India, which indicates active collusion by the overseas supplier.

Food Security and Health Implications

The chemicals Chlorantraniliprole Emamectin Benzoate are restricted for import into India. Importers, manufacturers and suppliers all need to be registered under India's *Insecticides Act, 1968* with the relevant authorities prior to any valid import.

There are very few importers who are registered under the *Insecticides Act, 1968* and are authorised to import such chemicals. Authorisation is granted only after rigorous testing and quality analysis of the products to be imported, as these chemicals are used as insecticides / pesticides in the agriculture industry. Keeping in perspective the effect of such chemicals on foods crops, a very stringent quality check is exercised by the authorities to prevent sub-standard products from entering the food chain.

However, in this instance, neither the importer nor the supplier were registered with the authorities. Thus, the goods were neither tested nor approved for use in India. Owing to the hazardous and toxic nature, such sub-standard and unapproved goods are detrimental to the environment and human health.

Further, the misuse of these agricultural products may endanger the food security of countries like India that have more than 1.3 billion people.

Financial Implications

It has been revealed that once the hazardous chemicals were imported into India under misdeclaration, they were distributed throughout India through an unaccounted Supply Chain system and hidden by parallel economic activities resulting in a loss of revenue in the millions of dollars to the government. The landed cost of product for genuine business entities is around USD400 per kilogram. Such illegal activities lead to diminished margins of genuine business entities globally.

By smuggling approximately 500 mt of hazardous chemicals, the syndicate has caused an estimated loss of more than USD60 million from genuine business transactions.

Intellectual Property Rights Implications

During the course of investigation, it came to light that the product Chlorantraniliprole, being imported in guise of Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer since January 2017, was a patented product with FMC USA, having the patent rights on production and supply. Such illegal production, supply and smuggling have clearly led to the violation of Intellectual Property Rights of the rights holders.

Powering Supply Chain Revival through the Express Cargo Clearance System

The express industry has emerged as one of the engines of growth in international e-commerce with integrated Supply Chains and fast delivery of goods to the customers' doorstep



Written by Sunil Kumar and
Kaushik Thinnaneri Ganesan
Indian Revenue Service (IRS)
Central Board of Indirect Taxes
and Customs (CBIC), India

/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director

The express industry has emerged as one of the engines of growth in international e-commerce with integrated Supply Chains and fast delivery of goods to the customers' doorstep. This industry has assumed greater relevance in the post-COVID era, with global Supply Chains having been severely disrupted over the past three years because of the pandemic. One of the crucial advantages of the express cargo industry, in addition to its end-to-end transportation, is the large volume of goods, thereby catering to an entire ecosystem within the larger Supply Chain. The express cargo industry also plays a critical role in maintaining uninterrupted supplies for the manufacturing sector in times of crises, due to unexpected roadblocks faced by regular logistics routes, and helps maintain just-in-time inventory. Businesses where time is of the essence are thus critically dependent on the express cargo industry for ensuring timely delivery of goods and services. The success of such businesses are thus intertwined with the efficiency of the express cargo industry.

About ECCS

The Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS) is the IT application of Indian Customs that enables automated clearances. It was launched in 2017 for the electronic clearance of courier consignments. It is a highly efficient and robust system catering to the fast-paced growth of this sector. This technology-driven system has contributed successfully towards increasing trade volumes, eliminating paperwork and reducing downtime, resulting in clearance of consignments within just a few hours. ECCS has one of the lowest dwell times leading to, on average, clearance of import consignments within five hours and clearance of exports consignments in approximately three and a half hours. Further, the facilitation levels in express cargo are also quite high – about 84 per cent of import consignments and almost 94 per cent of export consignments. ECCS has thus offered great benefit to the e-commerce industry in India and ensured hassle-free delivery and pick-up at the premises of importers and exporters alike.

Impact of COVID-19

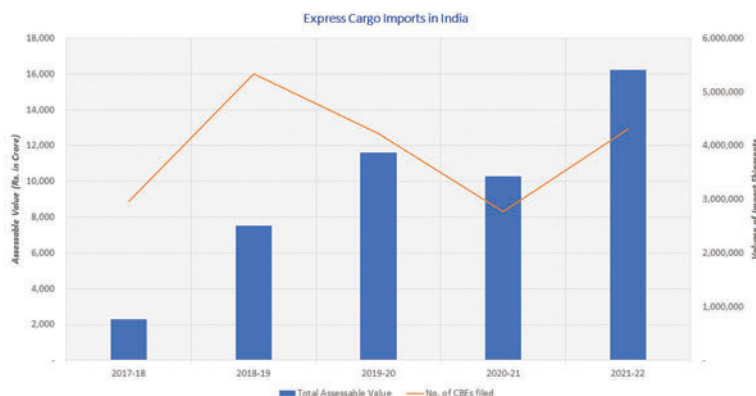
The impacts of the COVID-19 were also felt by the express cargo industry as trade volumes suffered during the pandemic. Despite the dip in volumes during this period, express cargo played a major role in providing support to the Indian Government in its fight against the pandemic. ECCS facilitated timely export of vaccines and medicines from India and also helped with the speedy import of medicines and medical equipment, such as oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters, etc. needed for hospitals. Daily meetings were held by Customs officials to review timely clearance of essential goods through express cargo. Indian Customs played a crucial role in ensuring express cargo was able to deliver essential goods to fight COVID-19, thanks in no small part to the ECCS.

National Logistics Policy and GST

The rollout of the pathbreaking Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 by the Indian Government provided a major boost to the logistics industry. The foremost impact was that India became a unified market, eliminating a plethora of regional levies and taxes. The rollout of GST combined with the soon-to-be-implemented National Logistics Policy is expected to provide for greater adoption of a hub-and-spoke model in multiple segments key to the logistics industry such as warehousing, cold chain, Container Freight Stations, etc. The express cargo industry, which is an integral part of the larger logistics ecosystem, has immensely benefited from GST and is poised to reap further benefits with the implementation of India's National Logistics Policy.

Outreach efforts

The theme of International Customs Day 2023 is 'Nurturing the Next Generation' and focuses on 'fostering and promoting a culture of knowledge-sharing and professional pride in Customs.' In keeping with the theme envisaged by the WCO, Indian Customs organised multiple outreach programs over the past few months, with specific relevance to express cargo and the Supply Chain.



First, Indian Customs was part of the Multimodal Maritime Regional Summit held in Mumbai in October 2022 as part of the National Logistics Policy, which envisaged the integration of various Departments of the Government of India so as to bring a holistic approach to infrastructure development throughout the country. Specifically, the key ideas discussed during this summit pertain to Using Technology for optimisation.

Express Cargo Imports into India by volume and assessable value during the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-20.

A Steering Committee Meeting of Express Cargo was also organised by Indian Customs in November 2022, involving the major express cargo services providers such as DHL, FedEx, UPS, Aramax, etc. and other stakeholders in the industry in India. The meeting involved a spirited and productive exchange of ideas on how to improve the express cargo trade in India.

In December 2022, Indian Customs organised a webinar on the Express Cargo Clearance System. This webinar saw wide participation from members of the trade sector as well as the general public and played a major role in spreading the knowledge and practices of express cargo – both from the Customs point of view as well as the industry point of view.

Conclusion

According to the India Express Logistics Market Outlook for 2022-28, the express industry is projected to grow at more than 15 per cent (CAGR). With such projected economic growth, Indian Customs is committed to supporting the global Supply Chain revival.

Achieving Supply Chain Integrity through the National Logistics Ecosystem

Implementation of the National Logistics Ecosystem (NLE) to achieve Supply Chain integration at Soekarno Hatta International Airport. The NLE aims to streamline and optimize trade operations

Written by
Nurutami Wahyujayani,
Customs Office, Director of
Customs and Excise, Indonesia

/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director



Supply Chain Integrity plays an essential role in supporting international trade, addressing the key issues of Supply Chain Security, and effectively managing Supply Chain Risks. In a broader context, the improvement of Supply Chain Management may also refine goods movements in the context of natural disasters and humanitarian assistance.

The World Bank uses Logistics Performance Index (LPI) as the benchmarking metric for measuring the efficiency of goods movements across and within borders. In particular, the LPI survey showed that Supply Chain Management and logistics performance should be considered together.

As part of the program to improve national logistic performance, Indonesia has established the National Logistics Ecosystem (NLE) under the

supervision of the Ministry of Finance. In 2013, the World Bank noted that the average logistics cost in Indonesia during eight years is equal to 26.3 per cent of GDP; therefore, the main target of NLE is to achieve the logistics cost ratio of 17 per cent of GDP in 2024.

NLE generates tangible and intangible impacts through improving costs and time efficiency, increasing productivity and competitiveness, and creating opportunities. As a result, NLE could support trade facilitation by making goods movements more efficient and cost-effective through integrated Supply Chains.

Indonesia Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGCE) uses NLE to integrate Supply Chain activities and streamline and optimize trade operations. This reduces delays and increases efficiency in the movement of goods across borders. NLE works

on both prosperity and security. With these two perspectives, DGCE plays an important role in the NLE program by playing the role of initiator of the digital launcher to accomplish the goal of regulating and controlling the movement of goods across national borders. The NLE runs as an enabler and as an orchestrator platform to connect inter-aggregator platforms, connecting Government to Government (G2G) and Business to Business (B2B).

DGCE deals with the main causes of the inefficiency of logistics cost – the duplication and repetition of documentation, asymmetric information about supply and demand, and unavailability of logistics platforms from upstream to downstream – by working in four aspects: (1) simplification of government and private business processes; (2) collaboration between government and private logistics; (3) digital payment services; and (4) spatial planning.

In the Soekarno-Hatta International airport, NLE contributes to the processing between inbound and outbound goods movements, starting from the airplane departure to the end customers, and involving all airport stakeholders, including: (1) freight forwarding/cargo owner; (2) airlines/ground handling; (3) consolidator; (4) trucking; (5) warehouse; and (6) other institutions such as quarantine and immigration control.

NLE requires commitment from all stakeholders. As implementation is likely to face a few challenges during

its initial rollout. The dependency on the digital platform to access NLE might be a big problem if the IT infrastructure is not ready, for example. Lastly, the connectivity between inter-institutional systems and coordination between various levels of government must be maintained continuously to improve NLE during and post-implementation.

Efficiency and effectiveness are critical points to maintaining Supply Chain Integrity. It is specifically true when the trade of goods is predictable and delivered on time. To support international trade, Customs administrations should look to modernise, reform old practices, develop new methods and continue to innovate.

The NLE is an effort from the government to increase economic competitiveness and improve the national logistic performance by working from two perspectives and involving all of the stakeholders in the port of entry. Providing better logistics services requires improving border agencies, infrastructure, and regulations through a holistic manner.

TRIDENT Protocol

Proposal for a Trade Related Information and Data Exchange Network and Transmission (TRIDENT) Protocol based on the WCO Data Model to create API based Information & Data Exchange Network

Written by Sh. Ramakrishna Kolopaka, Deputy Commissioner Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), India

/ Edited by Marivi Martin ABF Assistant Director

'Supply Chain Integrity' is a key variable in the Risk Management calculus of the Customs administrations. A high degree of trust in Supply Chain Integrity is a necessary condition for relaxing regulatory compliance requirements and thereby improving trade facilitation.

Customs, as the key stakeholder in global trade, is required to collect, analyse and verify the data received from various stake holders i.e. Importers, Customs administration of other jurisdictions, Trade bodies, Certifying Authorities, Logistics service providers etc. The data so received needs to be scrutinised by the Customs Authorities, considering Security, Revenue, Multilateral Agreements, Global Conventions dealing with Trade or Movement of Goods. The challenge lies in accessing, analysing and validating the relevant data in real time prior to clearance of goods, to reduce dwell time and thereby promote faster clearances for bona fide cargo. The lack of availability of authentic/validated data in advance for the Customs Authorities of Importing Jurisdictions at the time of clearances, remains a challenge in achieving the objectives of Supply Chain Integrity and Trade Facilitation and reducing the compliance costs for Trade.

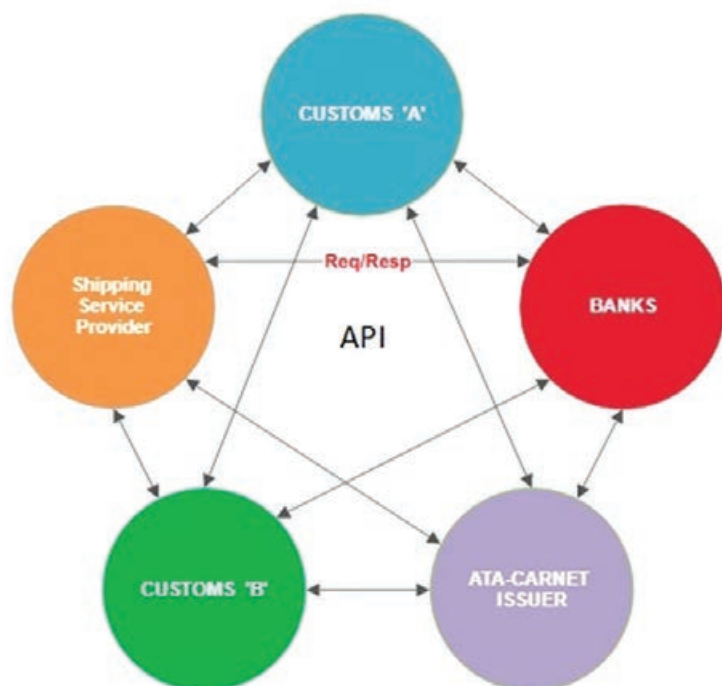
The data related to an EXIM transaction has many stakeholders including Customs of Exporting/ Importing Jurisdictions, Transporter/ Shipping Line/Airlines, Importer/ Exporter/Custom House Agents/ Brokers, Banks/Central Banks.

Almost every piece of information is shared between any of the two actors mentioned above. It is rare that a particular data element is available with all the relevant regulatory actors (at least in real time). For example, the invoice submitted by an exporter to the Customs authorities of Exporting Jurisdiction (for brevity 'Customs E') is not available to the Customs authorities of Importing Jurisdiction (for brevity 'Customs I'). If the data validated or authenticated by 'Customs E' is transmitted in real time to 'Customs I' leveraging the ICT solutions available, it can enable automated validation of the information submitted by the importer to the 'Customs I' and pave the way for faster clearances. This would eliminate the scope for mis-declaration in either 'Customs E' or 'Customs I'. Further, ATA-Carnet and Certificate of Origin (CoO) issued by various Trade Bodies / Jurisdictions are an important part of global trade facilitation architecture. However, the validation of trade documents such as ATA-Carnet or CoO is currently not fully geared up for automation.

Considering the above challenges, it's time to implement a common Application Programming Interface (API)-based information sharing platform. Though there have been proposals for using '*Permissioned Blockchain*' for storing and validating documents like CoO, considering the sensitive nature of the data and the involvement of sovereign actors, it is proposed to leverage the WCO Data Model to create API-based Information and Data Exchange Network.

The key features and use-cases of the proposed **Trade Related Information and Data Exchange Network and Transmission (TRIDENT) Protocol** are:

- REST (REpresentational State Transfer) API based architecture, with Jurisdiction based access controls
- Request/Response Message Schema based on WCO Data Model
- API for Real Time Exchange of Data (Request/Response Model) between Participating Jurisdictions
- API for sharing data in 'Batch' mode (Push Model)
- Scope for capturing Service Exports data by Customs
- Adoption of Standard Schema by Banks/Central Banks enabling reconciliation of Shipping Bill/Bill of Entry data with Remittances
- Tracking the provenance of High Sea Sales.
- Common Platform for validation of Compliances like Phyto-Sanitary Certificates/AQ/PQ/CITES, etc.
- Common Platform for sharing Incident Alerts/Intelligences
- Common Platform for verification and sharing of AEO data and non-compliance information



There is a compelling need to put in place a common platform for exchange of information among the various stakeholders of international trade in a seamless manner that would enable automation of various compliance activities, enabling greater Supply Chain Integrity and Trade Facilitation.

Diagram of an API-based Information and Data Exchange Network.

CASE STUDY

Kratom - Two Faces of an Inseparable Coin: kratom grows widely across Southeast Asia and increasingly in the trade of locally cultivated commodities. Indonesia has some of the largest exports of kratom in the world

Image: A farmer in Kapuas Hulu region, West Kalimantan cultivates kratom.

/ Written by By M Reyza Agrista, Alfredo Reca M.K. and Cevin Abiyyu, Directorate-General of Customs and Excise, Indonesia

/ Edited by Janayah Orchard ABF Cadet



The plant known as kratom (*Mitragyna Speciosa Korth.*) grows widely across Southeast Asia and increasingly in trade of cultivated commodities. Indonesia has some of the largest exports of kratom in the world.

Focus on kratom has increased due to growing usage and trade and growing concerns about the health impacts and side effects from increased usage.

Kratom has been used in traditional medicine across Southeast Asia. Kratom is often chewed or extracted and brewed in tea. It is used to treat a variety of medical conditions including high cholesterol, diabetes, gout, hypertension, insomnia, pain, rheumatism and typhoid. A 2018 article by Dr Griffin, 'Examining the Therapeutic Potential of kratom Within the American Drug Regulatory System', notes users also experience stimulative effects along with a sense of euphoria.

In a 2019 paper by Slamet Wahyono, 'Kratom Prospek Kesehatan dan Sosial Ekonomi', kratom is shown to deliver both analgesic, sedative, stimulant and other effects, such as immune system enhancing and antidepressant effects. Low doses of kratom provide a stimulant effect, while higher doses provide can induce a sedative effect. These effects are caused by the mitragynin and 7-hydroxymitraginin, which contain analgesics and anti-inflammatories, along with antidepressant, psychoactive and opioid-like properties. In a 2017 paper by 'Mitragyna Speciosa: Balancing Potential Medical Benefits and Abuse', Dr Halpenny notes mitragynin and 7-hydroxymitraginin compounds are significantly more potent than commonly prescribed painkillers.

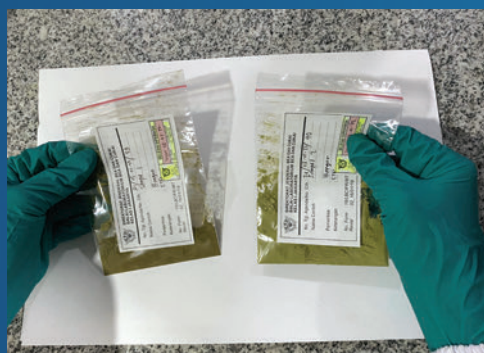
The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its 2013 Report classifies kratom as a New Psychoactive Substance (NPS) in the

same league as khat (*Catha Edulis*), but it has not been regulated as a narcotic or psychotropic substance in Indonesia and other jurisdictions in the Region. The legal status of kratom as a commodity or an illicit substance is not yet fully determined across the Region, although cultivation of kratom is within the scope of Agriculture administrations.



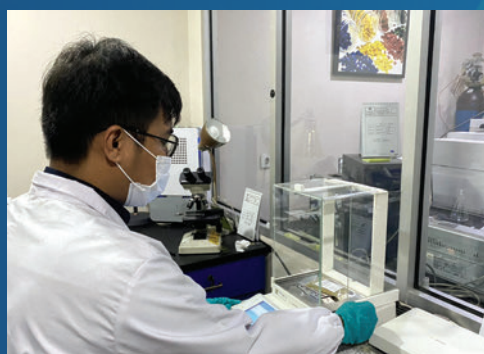
The farmer in Kapuas Hulu region, West Kalimantan cultivates kratom.

Indonesia's Directorate of Customs and Excise (DGCE) Laboratory has identified more than 100 samples of *Mitragyna Speciosa* since 2016, with the most samples identified as re-exports from countries that prohibit it as an NPS.



Kratom Identification in Jakarta Indonesia Customs and Excise Laboratory

From an economic perspective, kratom also has potential as an agricultural commodity for farmers who cultivate, process, and export kratom. Kratom plants are more promising for economic growth compared to rubber plantations, for example, as kratom grows naturally throughout Southeast Asia and does not require complicated maintenance or fertilization.



Kratom Identification in Jakarta Indonesia Customs and Excise Laboratory

Kratom has the potential as both a positive and negative influence that can either help improve national economic activity through increased trade or it could lead to destructive substance abuse to the detriment of society. The use and trade of kratom should be studied and considerations on what regulations should be applied explored by authorities to assess and determine its potential for both positive and negative influences.



An export document submission from Customs to PT Borneo Titian Berjaya, the first kratom export directly from Pontianak.

Building Connections with the Future Generation of Young Talent

The exchange of knowledge between the academic group and ABF's trade professionals has helped to establish an additional workforce development pipeline and brought tangible benefits to the ABF's operational programs



***Image:** ABF Inspector Lauren Hollington and Macquarie University Tutor Peter Siomos congratulating the PACE students after the presentation of their project findings.*

/ Submitted by the Trade Risk and Planning Section, ABF

Customs is a unique professional domain that requires the application of a broad range of technical skills and also encourages the development of intuitive skills. The Australian Border Force (ABF) is constantly exploring new ways to develop the professional knowledge and skills of its workforce to counter the diverse range of current and emerging threats to Australia's border integrity. This, in part, includes engaging in initiatives that broaden its collaboration with Academia through practical projects contributing to the ABF's mission, while promoting the Customs profession to the next generation.

As the ABF joins the international Customs community in celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the World Customs Organization (WCO), and explores the 2023 International Customs Day theme of 'Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting a culture of knowledge-sharing and professional pride in Customs,' we take the opportunity to reflect on our recent activities and success in this area.

In 2023, Customs Division within the ABF introduced a pilot internship program partnering with Australia's universities. This offered a great avenue for introducing the Customs profession to soon-to-be graduates, and provided training and development opportunities in key areas of specialised Customs tradecraft. A range of opportunities were presented in trade facilitation and enforcement areas, including a focus on emerging topics such as Trade Based Money Laundering (TBML).

In 2022, Customs Division also collaborated with Macquarie University on an open-source research project focusing on illicit trade trends. Under Macquarie University's Department of Security Studies and Criminology's Professional and Community Engagement (PACE) programme, the research project was undertaken with the purpose of defining 'illicit trade' in the current context of global trade enforcement. A select group of final-year undergraduate students led the research and were able to apply the knowledge and insights developed over the course of their study, to practical and complex real world problems. The research report identified global trends of illicit trade over the past five years, and incorporated a literature review to identify successful mitigation strategies for combating illicit trade in the Customs context. The research team specifically looked at the movement of counterfeit goods, pharmaceuticals, and lumber across Australian borders and their impact on the subversion of customs controls to avoid taxes, duties, permits or regulations.

ABF Voluntary Disclosures

Voluntary disclosures provide protection from penalties and prosecution if it is given voluntarily, truthfully and fully

A key aspect of Customs compliance is educating and communicating with traders so that honest companies better understand requirements and voluntarily comply with Customs and tax law.

The Australian Border Force Voluntary Disclosures (VDI) team facilitates voluntary industry compliance with Customs related law in relation to import and export declarations.

The VDI team receives and assesses voluntary disclosure submissions from importers and exporters who are often represented by consultants from accountancy firms, lawyers or brokers.

Submissions are lodged by importers and exporters who are seeking protection from Integrated Cargo System (ICS) reporting errors under s243T (revenue implications) and s243U (no revenue implications) of the Customs Act 1901 in Australia.

Essentially, to lodge a voluntary disclosure, a written notice to the ABF detailing the nature of the errors and the relevant declarations is required.

Error/omission types include:

- valuation adjustments
- transfer pricing adjustments
- incorrect tariff classification
- incorrect application of a Tariff Concession Order (TCO).

A voluntary disclosure provides protection from penalties and prosecution, if it is given voluntarily, truthfully and fully.

VDI in Numbers:

- Total revenue identified by the VDI team in FY 2021-22 was AUD138.205 million and the number of cases were 108.
- Total revenue identified by the VDI team in FY 2022-23 to date is AUD111.838 million and the number of cases are 70.
- In January 2023, total revenue identified by the VDI team was approximately AUD2.167 million and the number of cases were 4.
- Since the VDI team was established as a separate team in 2015, total revenue identified by the VDI team has been AUD665 million.

The VDI team have also engaged extensively with external stakeholders to promote the merits of voluntarily disclosing. Engagement has included attendance at symposiums, summits, trade exhibitions and the development of an E-learning module for the ABF website to be accessed by customs brokers, importers, and consultants.

The promotion of VDI is integral in ensuring industry cooperatively identify errors and omissions in their declarations to the ABF.

A Culture of Continuous Improvement

The VDI team has focused on streamlining its processes to significantly reduce its assessment times, effectively reducing a backlog from 2 years to 6 weeks, and actively marketing the benefits of voluntary disclosures to industry. The team recently received an ABF Australia Day award for their efforts.

The team welcomes engagement from colleagues in other Customs administrations to learn and share knowledge with a view to making further improvements in the voluntary disclosure environment.

Contact Us:

The ABF VDI team can be contacted at vdidi@abf.gov.au

Submitted by the Voluntary Disclosures (VDI) Team, ABF

Border Watch

Working with the cargo Supply Chain to help protect Australia's border

The Border Watch industry program is dedicated to building strong partnerships underpinned by trust and confidence



Image: Border Watch Coordinator Kate with narcotics detection dog Vulk

/ Submitted by Border Watch Engagement, ABF

The Border Watch program is an Australian government initiative that educates, informs and asks members of the community and industry to report suspicious border-related behaviour and activities.

Information received by Border Watch can lead to the prevention and detection of illicit or prohibited goods crossing the border including drugs, precursors, tobacco, wildlife, excess currency, weapons and prohibited chemicals.

Organisations can register as a Border Watch member and report any unusual or suspicious activity to help protect Australia's border. Australian-based businesses involved in the movement of goods and people across the Australian border are encouraged to join the Border Watch industry program. The Border Watch program is free to join.

Members include customs brokers, freight forwarders, shipping companies, warehouses and depots, airlines and transport companies. Members receive information sessions and free resources to raise awareness of border threats in their environment. In return, members agree to identify suspicious behaviour and report it to Border Watch. Border Watch members have access to a dedicated, 24-hour hotline.

Kate is the Border Watch Coordinator for Western Australia, responsible for promoting the program in Perth and regional locations. Kate says: 'People working in the Supply Chain know their environment, and what looks or sounds unusual. If it doesn't feel right, make it your business. Flag it with Border Watch. One small observation could help stop a much larger border crime.'

In the 2021-22 financial year, Border Watch received 25,960 reports from members of industry and the community. Reports can be made anonymously.

More information: borderwatch.gov.au



**IF IT DOESN'T
FEEL RIGHT**

Have you seen something that doesn't feel right? One small observation could help stop a much larger border crime.

FLAG IT

Report anonymously at
borderwatch.gov.au



**Australian
BORDER FORCE**

SPOTLIGHT

The Regional Private Sector Group – Asia/Pacific

The Regional Private Sector Group – Asia/Pacific (RPSG A/P) was established at the World Customs Organization Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administration (RHCA) meeting in November 2020

Spotlight from the Editor:
Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director

The Regional Private Sector Group for the Asia/Pacific (RPSG A/P) consists of representatives from private sector companies across the Asia/Pacific Region and supports the work program and priorities of the WCO, the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair and the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG), with which it is closely aligned. The RPSG A/P aims to improve understanding between government and the private sector and improve regional representation and granularity on customs and trade matters.

The RPSG A/P has identified several key priorities for the Region, and has established working groups to consider and undertake research on these issues, which include:

- Voluntary Disclosure
- Free Trade Agreement Rules of Origin / Certification
- Digitalisation
- E-Commerce
- Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) program, and
- the SAFE Framework of Standards

An additional focus area is 'Green Customs', which the RPSG A/P views as a matter that is broader than just Customs. Several Green Customs initiatives the RPSG A/P supports include paperless certificates and declarations, improving electronic risk assessments and electronic clearance of vessel processing to streamline the procedures for cargo ships.



Meet your Chair and Vice-Chair of the RPSG A/P

The RPSG A/P consists of 30 representatives nominated for three-year membership terms from across the spectrum of the private sector, including private companies, business associations and Chambers of Commerce



Mr Kit Hickey – Chair

Fonterra Cooperative Group Customs Manager

Kit provides specialist advice to Fonterra's manufacturing and trading activities as well as projects related to cross-border business methodologies, regulatory compliance, and tariff optimisation. This includes the development and delivery of training packages on topics such as classification and preferential rules of origin, as well as managing engagement with border agencies.

Kit is currently providing private sector input on rules of origin to the WCO review of the Revised Kyoto Convention (Specifically Annex K) and represents Fonterra at the PSCG.

Kit was re-elected Chair of the RPSG A/P in November 2022.



Ms Wendy Stanton – Vice Chair

Customs Manager IKEA Distribution Services Pty Ltd

Wendy is responsible for all cross-border functions for IKEA Group Australia. Wendy is also a member of the IKEA Global Customs Co Ordination team, tagged as the "IKEA-voice" towards customs authorities, trade organisations on customs and trade issues.

Wendy serves as Internal Adviser to all of the IKEA group in Customs and trade issues, taking part in the product development chain. Wendy also trains and informs units in the IKEA group in matters relating to compliance, Free Trade Agreements regulation, import restrictions, customs duties minimisation, new legislation and policy.

Wendy was elected Vice-Chair of the RPSG A/P in November 2022.

ASIA/PACIFIC REGIONAL NEWS – EVENTS & CAPACITY BUILDING



Thai Customs

International Customs Day 2023

The Thai Customs Department held celebrations for International Customs Day 2023, held on 26 January at Customs Hall of the Customs Department in Bangkok, Thailand

“Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting a Culture of Knowledge-sharing and Professional Pride in Customs”

Mr Patchara Anuntasilpa, Director-General of the Thai Customs Department, presided over the celebrations for International Customs Day 2023, awarding Customs officials the World Customs Organization (WCO) Certificate of Merit on 26 January 2023 at Customs Hall, Building 1, of the Customs Department.

The Director-General highlighted that the theme for International Customs Day (ICD), held annually on 26 January, called for “Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting a Culture of Knowledge-sharing and Professional Pride in Customs”. He also noted that this year, 2023, the Customs community celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the WCO. This theme takes the new generation as its crucial reference point; Customs Administrations are encouraged to attract and support new young officers through knowledge management. Customs should therefore adopt their organizational culture to support knowledge-sharing for newcomers and also impart knowledge to the next generation. This can lead to pride in customs career and inspire the sense of belonging in this community.



In this regard, a total of 29 customs officers who have demonstrated their commitment to the 2023 theme were selected to be awarded the Certificates of Merit from the WCO.

Guests of honor in attendance at this event included Thai Customs executives, Bangkok-based Customs Attachés together with representatives from embassies, international organizations and the WCO.

Above Images: Thai Customs officers and recipients of the WCO 2023 Certificates of Merit; and Senior Executives of Thai Customs and guests of honour during ICD 2023 celebrations in Bangkok, Thailand.

/ Submitted by the
International Cooperation
Section of the Thai Customs
Department

/ Edited by Janayah Orchard
ABF Cadet

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Celebrates the 10th Anniversary of its AEO Programme

Hong Kong Customs and Excise (HKCE) marked the 10th anniversary of the Hong Kong AEO Programme in 2022, having formally launched its Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme in Hong Kong, China in April 2012



Image: The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau (left), officiated celebrations at the launch ceremony with the Commissioner of Customs and Excise of Hong Kong (HKCE), Ms Louise Ho (right).

/ Submitted by the Office of Customs Affairs and Co-operation, HKCE

/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director

Following the WCO's SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade, the Hong Kong, China AEO Programme aims to safeguard global Supply Chain security as well as facilitate legitimate trade.

Growing Scale through 10-year Development

Hong Kong Customs and Excise (HKCE) gave consideration at the very beginning in designing the AEO Programme to cope with the unique business environment in Hong Kong, China. Since more than 90 per cent of the enterprises in Hong Kong, China are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the HKCE AEO Programme has been tailor-made as a two-tier certification regime to facilitate them to obtain AEO status. SMEs are welcome to apply for Tier 1 status with more

simplified criteria from the onset and then upgrade to Tier 2 status when their internal control and crisis management system are further enhanced. Advice from designated Customs officers is provided throughout the accreditation process, as well as post-accreditation.

The AEO Programme has gone through a decade of development. To date, about 80 local companies including multinational corporates and SMEs from different sectors are accredited as AEOs in Hong Kong, China. They are recognised as a trusted partner of HKCE in enhancing the global Supply Chain security together. They enjoy appropriate incentives including reduced or prioritised Customs inspection as their compliance mechanism and security measures are comprehensive and of a high standard. In the first three quarters of 2022, over HKD648 billion worth of AEO cargoes benefited from facilitation under the Programme, which contributed to 9 per cent of Hong Kong, China's total trade volume.

Continuous Efforts to Facilitate Legitimate Trade

To strive for more trade facilitation benefits for legitimate traders, HKCE has been working with different parties and organisations over the years. With the collaborations established in recent years, AEOs in Hong Kong, China can now enjoy prioritised processing and expedited review when making applications under the Free Trade Agreement Transshipment Facilitation Scheme or for the ATA Carnet. They therefore benefit from reduced operational costs and enjoy faster reductions in tariff processing.



Externally, HKCE is dedicated to extending its global AEO network, aiming to contribute to the constitution of a more reliable global Supply Chain. Currently, HKCE has ratified 13 Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) with Customs administrations from the Mainland China, India, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Canada, Mexico and Indonesia. The latest MRA was concluded with the Indonesian Directorate-General of Customs and Excise in August 2022, with concerted efforts made by officers from both sides to overcome challenges encountered during the epidemic period. AEOs in Hong Kong, China can enjoy clearance facilitation in relevant economies which also helps them enhance their competitiveness and marketability.

Celebration Ceremony Marking the Start of Another Era

HKCE held the 10th anniversary ceremony of the AEO Programme in Hong Kong, China in November 2022, celebrating its successes and committing to further promote the AEO concept in the future. About 200

guests, including consuls, customs attachés, AEOs, trade association representatives, attended the ceremony. The Secretary-General of the WCO, Dr Kunito Mikuriya, in a short video, congratulated and recognised HKCE's efforts in maintaining close partnership with industries to jointly secure the global Supply Chain. He also sent his congratulations for the 10th anniversary of AEO Programme in Hong Kong, China.

During the ceremony, the Commissioner of HKCE, Ms Louise Ho, remarked, "In addition to our traditional role as a law enforcer and gatekeeper," HKCE also takes up the role as an "economic development promoter". HKCE will continue to develop the AEO Programme and extend the MRA network to bring more benefits to enterprises and further enhance the cooperation between Hong Kong, China and other adjacent regions."

HKCE held a ceremony to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the AEO Programme in Hong Kong, China.

G20 Bali Summit 2022

The local Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGCE) Office of Ngurah Rai, Indonesia – dedication above and beyond the call of duty in hosting the G20 Bali Summit amidst COVID-19

Submitted by the Ngurah Rai Office of the Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGCE), Indonesia

*/ Edited by Janayah Orchard
ABF Cadet*

On 15-16 November 2022, the President of Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo announced the conclusion of Indonesia's tenure as Chair for the G20 Summit 2022. Throughout its tenure, Indonesia strove to have a lasting impact as G20 Chair on the areas and policies of the Economy, Tourism, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Health, as well as demonstrating Indonesia's standing, leadership and trust within the organization itself.

Indonesia's chairmanship commenced in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought about a 'New Normal' in the world. Increased geopolitical tensions were among many of the challenges that emerged during the pandemic. This resulted in increased risk and the need for security protocols during Indonesia's host of the G20 Summit.

Acknowledging the many challenges ahead, the local Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGCE) Office of Ngurah Rai, from the Regional Office of Bali (NTB and NTT), formed part of the Airport Hospitality Task Force to help ensure the smooth operations of hosting the G20 Summit and events in Bali. This involved varied and challenging tasks.

The DGCE Ngurah Rai Office helped to ensure the secure and safe flow of goods during G20 events such as the Finance Tracks, Sherpa Tracks, and the Summit itself and went above and beyond in performance of their duties.

Safety and security protocols were of particular importance. Discrepancies between agendas, interests, protocols and schedules of G20 Members can be very different and therefore require intense coordination, intricate planning and adaptable approaches to facilitate their attendance and participation and ensure security and smooth logistics. This involved inter-agency collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Airport Authority, and the National Agency for Disaster Countermeasure along with local law enforcement and state security agencies, among other authorities, to ensure all aspects of the event went smoothly.

Officers of the local DGCE Ngurah Rai Office were thankful to be acknowledged in their role of supporting Indonesia's chairmanship of the G20 and hosting the successful G20 Summit in Bali. Their dedication and efforts above and beyond the call of duty were recognized with the awarding of the WCO Certificate of Merit to all Task Force members during celebrations on International Customs Day, 26 January 2023.

The local DGCE Ngurah Rai Office looks forward to leveraging from this experience on the Airport Hospitality Task Force in support of Indonesia's Chairmanship of ASEAN during 2023 to contribute to the security and facilitation of hosting successful events. (GSN/WIL/TRI)



G20 Delegation Arrival



G20 Delegations escorted by Liaison Officers and Airport Hospitality team



Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani supervising the preparation of Airport Hospitality Team



Minister of Finance, Ms. Sri Mulyani Welcoming delegations in the G20 2nd Finance and Health Ministerial Meeting

The Home Affairs Portfolio Industry Summit 2022

In November 2022, the Department of Home Affairs hosted its annual premier industry engagement event, the Home Affairs Portfolio Industry Summit in Sydney at the International Convention Centre (ICC)



Image: The Hon Clare O'Neil MP, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Cyber Security delivers the keynote address to the Home Affairs Industry Summit 2022

/ Submitted by Industry Engagement, ABF

/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director

The 2022 Home Affairs Portfolio Industry Summit hosted more than 500 participants from across government, industry, academia, diplomatic corps and the broader community. The theme was National Resilience and brought together senior leaders from a range of disciplines to discuss opportunities to work more closely together.

The Summit's keynote address was delivered by the Hon. Clare O'Neil MP, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Cyber Security. Minister O'Neil discussed the establishment of the National Resilience Taskforce, the development of a new migration strategy, and how the portfolio is collaborating with industry and academia to respond to recent cyber security breaches and the threats posed by cybercrime.

The Hon. Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs also provided an address, discussing the work to address labour shortages and improve visa processing. The Minister for Emergency Management, the Hon. Murray Watt MP, spoke of efforts to provide coordinated, scalable and adaptive disaster assistance through Australia's newly established National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

Michael Pezzullo AO, Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs, joined Michael Outram APM, ABF Commissioner, and Brendan Moon AM ASM, the Coordinator-General of NEMA for a panel discussion on the importance of building partnerships across private and public sectors to better respond to challenges such as natural disasters, climate change and cyber attacks. CEO of the Minderoo Foundation Fire and Flood Resilience, Adrian Turner, also addressed delegates on emerging threats and the need for resilient networks. A second Panel discussed critical infrastructure and engaging with risk, chaired by Hamish Hansford from the Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre.

The afternoon included nine specialised workshop panel discussions with a range of presenters across trade and customs, cyber security and critical infrastructure, immigration, national resilience and climate adaptation. Delegates also had the chance to meet with portfolio staff at the Summit's exhibition space, showcasing some of the portfolio's latest initiatives, and for a special guest appearance from the ABF Detector Dog Program.

Reinvigorating in-person Customs Engagement within APEC

The Australian Border Force Customs and Trade Policy Branch supports international engagement within a number of Customs-focused multilateral forums to enhance trade facilitation and Supply Chain Integrity

Last month, Assistant Secretary Customs and Trade Policy, Kimberlee Stamatis represented the Department of Home Affairs Portfolio at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum's key procedural meeting, complementing the Department of Home Affairs and Australian Border Force (ABF) engagement with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Oceania Customs Organisation.

Joining officials from APEC's 21 Member economies in the United States (US), Ms Stamatis was part of the APEC's Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP) Plenary and Digitization of Supply Chains Workshop of the First Senior Officials Meeting (SOM1) of APEC 2023.

The SCCP fulfills the commitments of APEC Leaders and Ministers to address Customs matters, with goals focused on trade facilitation and security, and Customs-related enforcement matters.

A highlight of the SCCP was the opportunity for the ABF to join representatives from Peru and Thailand on a 'Green Customs' discussion panel. Green Customs is a focus for both APEC and the WCO, as they explore the role of Customs administrations to support sustainable Supply Chains and environmentally friendly trade policies.

Ms Stamatis was able to showcase the ABF's recent work to develop a Green Customs Framework to help guide green trade policy development,



commenting that, "Australia is a leader among APEC economies in this field, and Members are looking to learn from our experiences, best-practice and lessons learned."

Also on the agenda was the issue of gender equality in Customs. A recent APEC survey found that women in Customs only make up around 34 per cent of senior leadership roles and 35 per cent of frontline operational roles.

In line with the WCO, APEC (via the SCCP) is working to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Asia-Pacific Region, by addressing any barriers that women in Customs administrations may face.

The ABF's work through multilateral institutions, most prominently through APEC and the WCO, to progress Green Customs matters and support gender equality are just two of the interesting and important topical subjects we deal with on a regular basis.

Image: Assistant Secretary Customs and Trade Policy, Kimberlee Stamatis

/ Written by Emma Brill, Assistant Director ABF, and Chris Kelly, Senior Customs Policy Officer, ABF



*Republished
with permission from the WCO*



A Sub-regional Workshop on cross-border e-commerce was held from 16 to 19 January 2023 at the World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Suva, Fiji. The objective of the Workshop was to raise awareness of the WCO tools and initiatives aimed at facilitating and securing cross-border e-commerce and to discuss good practices and challenges in this area.

The event was organized with the financial support of the Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF) of China and benefitted from the participation of twelve Customs officials from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu. During the last day of the Workshop, the participants attending on-site were joined by some representatives of designated postal operators from the beneficiary countries for an online presentation by the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

Throughout the event, the Workshop facilitators provided detailed explanations of the 16 standards of the WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce and the tools available to support their implementation. Dedicated sessions discussed the WCO Immediate Release Guidelines and the tools developed jointly with the UPU, such as the WCO-UPU Postal Customs Guide and the WCO-UPU Guidelines on the exchange of electronic advance data between designated operators and Customs administrations.

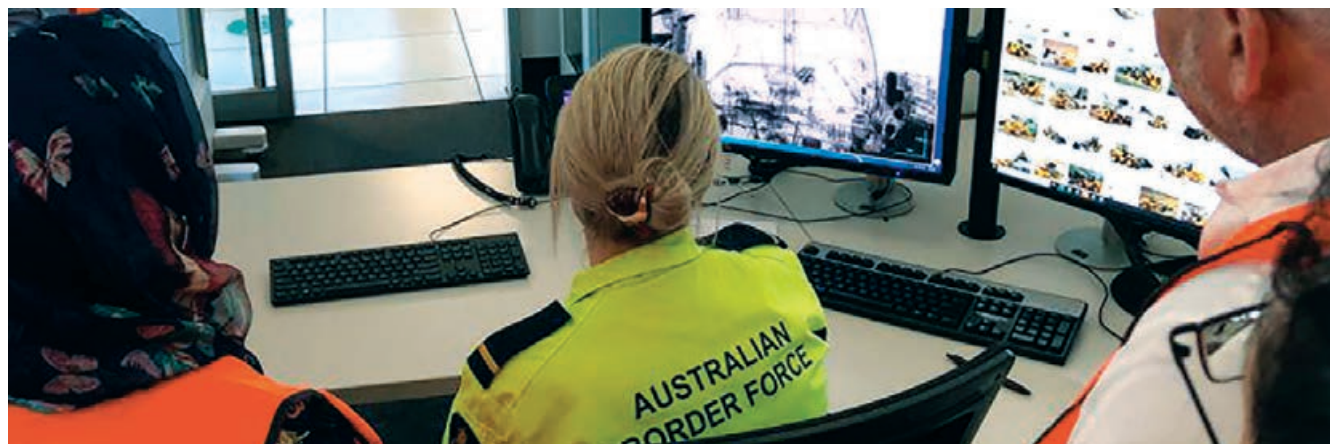
The six beneficiary Members delivered presentations focusing on revenue collection, facilitation and control of cross-border e-commerce, which were the basis for valuable exchanges of information on challenges and possible solutions.

During his closing remarks, the Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, Mark Dixon, highlighted the opportunity provided by the Workshop to enhance cooperation in the sub-Region on the important topic of cross-border e-commerce and expressed his readiness to support future sub-regional events at the WCO RTC in Fiji.

Original WCO article online at:
<https://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2023/january/pacific-island-members-discuss-how-to-improve-the-facilitation-and-control-of-small.aspx>

WCO Operation TENTACLE AML/CTF (TBML) Workshop 2023

**“Customs agencies are indispensable in the whole-of-government effort to tackle the scourge of money laundering”
ABF Commissioner Outram said during his opening address at the WCO AML/CTF (TBML) Workshop in Brisbane**



The 2023 World Customs Organization (WCO) Operation TENTACLE Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Terrorism Financing (CTF) Workshop was hosted by the Australian Border Force (ABF) in collaboration with the WCO AML/CTF Programme and staff from Operation Tentacle in Brisbane from 27 February to 3 March. It was attended by 62 representatives from 23 countries from the Asia/Pacific alongside Australia’s money laundering regulator AUSTRAC, and global authorities INTERPOL and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units.

The Workshop raised awareness of the prolific threat of money laundering and terrorism financing and reinforced the critical role of Customs in anti-money laundering efforts. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity for customs and partner agencies to deepen understanding of the complex challenges posed by money laundering and terrorism financing.

In an opening address in his capacity as the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair, ABF Commissioner Michael Outram APM emphasised the

importance of the role of Customs in the fight against transnational serious organised crime. Criminals “infiltrate every aspect of our Supply Chains, using methods that include trade-based money laundering and bulk cash smuggling, to move hidden value across our borders. Working alongside key partners, Customs agencies are able to reduce the influence of crime and ultimately protect our communities from harm.”

“Improving the capacity for Customs agencies to deliver anti-money laundering enforcement will lead to a commensurate strengthening of national, regional and international security. Our collective role, both nationally and regionally, underpins our overall responsibility to safeguard our communities from the effects of illicit value transfer.”

Commissioner Outram expressed his gratitude to the US Department of State - Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs for their exceptional leadership and financial support initiatives of WCO Operation TENTACLE, including the Workshop.

*Written by Daniel Strack
ABF Superintendent*

*/ Edited by Marivi Martin
ABF Assistant Director*

The 32nd WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points Meeting

The 32nd WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points (RCP) Meeting was hosted in Australia by the Office of the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair in the city of Brisbane from 14 - 18 November 2022



*Submitted by
the Secretariat Office of
the WCO Asia/Pacific
Regional Vice-Chair*

Image: Australian Border Force (ABF) Commissioner and Comptroller-General of Customs, Michael Outram APM, delivers his report as the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia Pacific Regional Vice-Chair (APVC) to Regional Contact Points and Honoured Guests at the Asia/Pacific 32nd Regional Contact Points (RCP) Meeting in Brisbane on 14 November 2023.

Deputy Comptroller-General of Customs Vanessa Holben Chaired the 32nd RCP for the Office of the APVC, joined by ABF Assistant Secretary and Secretariat for the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair, Ms Kimberlee Stamatias and Honoured Guests, including Regional Development Manager for the Asia/Pacific (CFF-Japan Assistant Fund Manager), Ms Akiko Kojima, representing the WCO.



Regional Contact Points and honoured guests pose for the official photograph for the 32nd Regional Contact Points Meeting in Brisbane.



Regional Contact Points participate in a table top exercise to apply perspectives through practical exchange at the 32nd Regional Contact Points Meeting in Brisbane.



Regional Contact Points and honoured guests pose for a photograph during a visit to Brisbane's Long Pine Koala Sanctuary during the 32nd Regional Contact Points Meeting.



Regional Contact Points and honoured guests relax and socialise over fine dining at Blackbird Bar and Grill in Brisbane during the 32nd Regional Contact Points Meeting.

RECENT AND UPCOMING WCO EVENTS

March 2023 43rd Enforcement Committee (27 - 31 March)

April 2023 108th Finance Committee (3 - 6 April)

239th / 240th Permanent Technical Committee (24 - 28 April)

May 2023 24th Regional Heads of Customs Administration (RHCA), Perth (28 - 31 May)

June 2023 WCO/UPU Global Conference, Tokyo (5 - 9 June)

Caucus ahead of 88th Policy Commission (Date TBD)

88th Policy Commission (19 - 21 June)

WCO COUNCIL (141st/142nd) 22 JUNE 2023

October 2023 33rd Regional Contact Points (RCP) (Date TBD)

241st/242nd Permanent Technical Committee (Date TBD)

109th Finance Committee (Date TBD)

November 2023 Caucus ahead of 89th Policy Commission (Date TBD)

December 2023 89th Policy Commission (Date TBD)

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT OFFICE: NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

We hope you have enjoyed reading Volume #68 of the Asia/Pacific Customs News on 'Supply Chain Integrity' and that you will look forward to the next issue, Volume #69 on 'Nurturing the Next Generation' in July 2023



Thank you to all the contributors from Asia/Pacific Customs administrations and local commands that submitted articles and pictures for the March/April 2023 issue of the Asia/Pacific Customs News newsletter, including:

Australian Border Force

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs of India

Directorate General of Customs and Excise of Indonesia

Hong Kong Customs and Excise

Singapore Customs

Thai Customs

The Secretariat Office for the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Vice-Chair was very impressed with the number and quality of submissions and is very pleased the topic of 'Supply Chain Integrity' generated such substantial interest from Member administrations.

Also, a big thank you to **WCO Director of Compliance and Facilitation, Mr Pranab Kumar Das**, who kindly provided the Forward for this issue on 'Supply Chain Integrity'. The Secretariat Office was delighted that this issue could reflect recent discussions at the 43rd Session of Enforcement Committee.

Thank you again to all contributors for your submissions and helping to make this issue of Asia/Pacific Customs News a success.

We would like to take this opportunity to invite Asia/Pacific Customs administrations to consider submitting an article for the next (July) issue, **Volume #69**, the theme of which will focus on the new and interconnected topic of 'Nurturing the Next Generation'. Please email your submissions, including photos, to the Secretariat mailbox at apvc-wco@abf.gov.au.

NOTES



**IF IT DOESN'T
FEEL RIGHT**

Have you seen something that doesn't feel right? One small observation could help stop a much larger border crime.

FLAG IT

Report anonymously at
borderwatch.gov.au



**Australian
BORDER FORCE**



ASIA/PACIFIC CUSTOMS NEWS

Volume #68 March/April 2023

SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRITY

Growth | Unity | Security | Prosperity