



ASIA/PACIFIC #73 CUSTOMS NEWS

Volume #73



Volume #73
DEC 2024
Customs News
ASIA/PACIFIC
Regional Customs



**Engaging Traditional and
New Partners with Purpose**

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Louise Ho

WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

Commissioner of Hong Kong Customs



A brief note from the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

Dear Esteemed Members of the WCO Asia/Pacific Region,

It is my great honour to present to you the 73rd issue of the WCO Asia/Pacific Customs News as the newly elected Vice-Chairperson for the WCO Asia/Pacific Region. It is a significant milestone for Hong Kong Customs, in the name of Hong Kong, China, to take over the vice-chairpersonship from our esteemed colleagues in Australia. I would like to once again extend my greatest gratitude to the Australian Border Force for their excellent work and remarkable achievements made during their tenure, and solicit your full support in the coming two years.

The theme of this issue, “Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose”, reflects our collective commitment to strengthening regional co-operation and building meaningful partnerships across the Asia/Pacific region. In this issue, you will find a diverse range of articles showcasing the innovative work of member administrations in our region to engage both traditional and new partners through close collaborations. These articles highlight how our members are forging strategic partnerships to address emerging global challenges and drive progress on shared priorities. From collaborations with industry leaders to cross-border co-operation, our members have been demonstrating the power of purpose-driven engagement to make positive changes. From Australia’s efforts to mobilise its border force for

new international flight operations to Indonesia’s collaborations with palm oil exporters and Fiji’s engagement with partners to strengthen border management, this issue highlights the agility and adaptability of customs administrations by working hand-in-hand with fellow members and industry partners amidst the evolving global landscape.

I am also pleased to announce that this issue will feature a special “Customs Appreciation” corner, where we recognise the outstanding contributions of our dedicated officers from different customs administrations across the region. Their exceptional efforts in and unwavering dedication to serving their communities are truly inspiring, and I am honoured to celebrate their achievements in this brand new section.

As we check out this new issue of the Asia/Pacific Customs News, I am confident that our collective efforts will continue to strengthen the resilience and integrity of our supply chains, foster greater economic co-operation, and uphold the values of the World Customs Organization. I look forward to working closely with all of you in the years ahead.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the WCO Asia/Pacific region.



Kin-Kei LI

Head of Secretariat Office

WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

Assistant Commissioner (World Customs Organization) of Hong Kong Customs

A brief note from the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

Dear WCO Asia/Pacific Colleagues,

In this edition of the Asia/Pacific (A/P) Customs News, we are excited to explore the theme of “Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose”. This issue highlights the importance of maintaining long-standing relations and fostering new partnerships to advance our regional priorities and strengthen supply chain resilience.

The A/P region is a diverse and dynamic region, with 35 member administrations bringing together a good wealth of experience and expertise. Under the leadership of the Australian Border Force in the past two years, we made significant progress in mapping out the regional priorities and fostering collaborations among our members. One of the key focus areas identified in the Regional Strategic Plan 2022-2024 is trade facilitation and security. In this domain, we have recognised the importance of engaging both traditional and new partners to ensure the integrity and resilience of our supply chains.

International relationships and foreign affairs put emphasis on maintaining bonds and mutual understanding between different countries. It is equally important for the Customs community to maintain ongoing collaborations with traditional partners for leveraging shared expertise and resources, as it is to

engage with new partners to expand our network of co-operation, and to explore new areas and ideas in the delivery of our Customs functions to the world. The establishment of the A/P Regional Private Sector Group (RPSG-A/P) marked a big step in creating an alternative platform to collaborate with industry stakeholders on issues of mutual concern.

The global Customs community has started to observe a growing need for a closer customs-private sector partnership. New and emerging partners may include the sectors of e-commerce platforms, logistics providers, disruptive technology, research institutions, etc. In this fast changing world, we need to always keep our minds open and stay creative to address the evolving challenges.

We invite you to delve into the articles which showcase the remarkable work carried out across the region and the power of purposeful partnerships. We will continue to devote our best efforts to forge partnerships and explore new avenues for collaboration. Let’s keep the world safe and work together for a secure, efficient and sustainable future.



Spotlight



Australia

The Australian Border Force Mobilises for Broome International Flights



The ABF Broome International Airport processing team pose for a group photo.

Broome is the gateway for international travellers into the Kimberley region of Western Australia, famous for its breathtaking natural beauty, expansive countryside and laidback lifestyle.

Broome is the gateway for international travellers into the Kimberley region of Western Australia, famous for its breathtaking natural beauty, expansive countryside and laidback lifestyle. News of Jetstar Asia Airways commencing twice weekly international flights from Singapore to Broome was widely welcomed by the local tourism industry in Western Australia, but for Australian Border Force (ABF) Operations West this required a major planning exercise to ensure the airport could be ready to receive passengers at Immigration and Customs Control before the first flight landed in the

iconic town on 25 June 2024.

Broome International Airport had not received international flights since 2018, meaning from a border clearance perspective, officers based at the local District Office were primarily focused on managing international sea ports – with everything from vessel searches, marine crew visas to passengers on international cruise ships. Border services for international flights were only required on an infrequent and ad hoc, pre-arranged basis.



Australia

These additional tasks are on top of the wide ranging work already undertaken by officers in these remote areas of Australia, including patrolling a region that is twice the size of the Australian state of Victoria (or roughly the size of Papua New Guinea).

ABF Superintendent, Maritime Operations, Shaun Senior said opening new regular international flights at an Australian regional airport that is thousands of kilometres from the nearest city was always going to be a logistical challenge.

"Flights are scheduled to land and take off twice a week and they're seasonal, so will only run during Broome's dry season from April to October, which added to the complexity," Superintendent Senior said.

"As well as making officers available, we also had to ensure the facilities for the processing of international passengers was suitable, secure and traveller-friendly, as we started with a blank space."

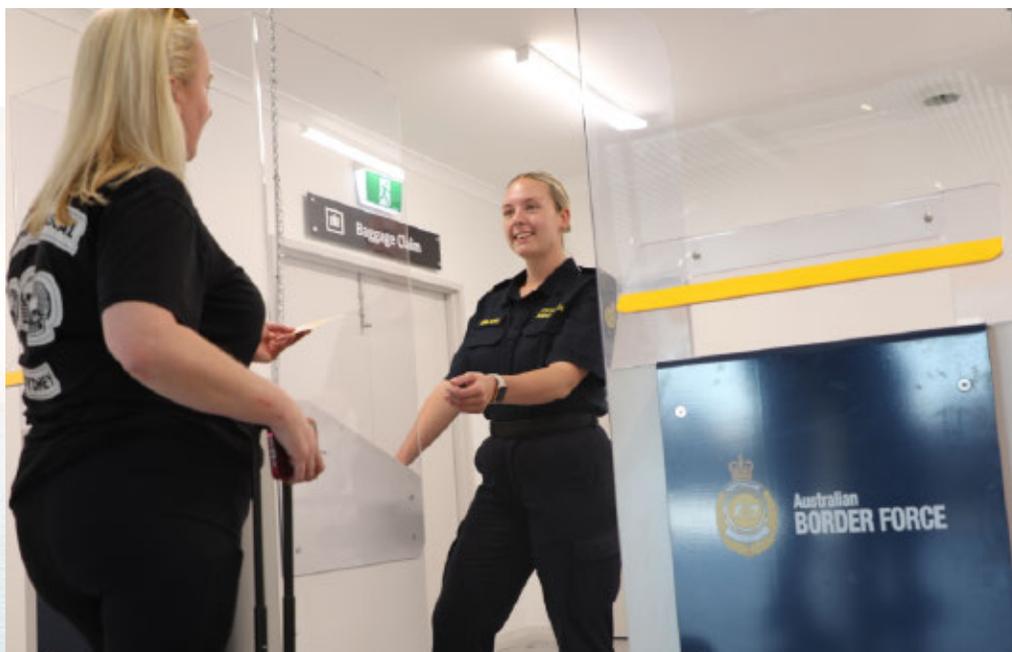
Superintendent Senior said the ABF developed a three-week surge roster for Broome with officers from all over Australia. These officers, deployed to Broome

since the first flight which landed in June, have found the work an extremely rewarding and a unique experience.

"We were able to rise to the challenge to support these new flights. Once again our officers have shown their absolute dedication to their roles."

This regional development is typical of the varying work and responsibilities the ABF is called on to perform and exemplifies the agility of its officers and their ability to pivot to meet new operational requirements. And, in this instance, it also showcases a local example of the ABF's ability to engage with new and traditional partners – with Broome International Airport and Jetstar Asia Airways – to develop a new ongoing capability and expanded capacity in performing their duties to secure and protect Australia's borders and facilitate trade and travel.

For more information about Broome International Airport, visit the <https://www.broomeair.com.au/> website.



A member of the Broome International Airport processing team at the newly installed processing booths practice receiving volunteer "passengers".



Fiji

The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service Engages with Partners to Strengthen Fiji's Border Management



The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) team with team from the Australian Border Force (ABF) during the training on strengthening the Customs Licensing process, Authorised Economic Operators program and developing the demerit points for the Customs Brokers and authorized clerks.

The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) is committed to collaborating with our local, regional and international partners and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive understanding of the threat environment and expand the use of risk-informed strategies to anticipate, detect and disrupt the threats while facilitating their expedited flow of lawful trade and travel.

In August 2024, FRCS signed a Joint Work Program with the Australian Border Force (ABF) with the aim of strengthening collaboration of border security. The Program has been developed to outline the lines of effort for enhancing interoperability, strengthened engagement and capacity building programs to deliver joint responses to emerging regional needs, priorities and shared border challenges across the Pacific.

Over the past years, ABF has closely collaborated with FRCS in the fight against revenue leakage and the promotion of legitimate trade and travel, particularly through further advancing capabilities in areas such as maritime security, intelligence, and targeting operations,

along with improved screening processes for containers, cargo, and mail, strengthening the Customs Licensing process, Authorised Economic Operators program , developing the demerit points for the Customs Brokers and authorized clerks.

Not only ABF, but FRCS is also collaborating with other regional and international partners including the New Zealand Customs Service who is assisting with the development of the intelligence framework as well as closely working with New Zealand Police and UN agencies.

A recent series of training in Seaport Border Management Vessel Search Training supported by the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in partnership with FRCS and other agencies led to several successful detection and seizures of smuggled and illegal goods. These trainings underscored the importance of leveraging the strengths of partner agencies to enhance detection, deterrence, and response to maritime security threats.



In partnership with other Fijian law enforcement agencies including the Republic of Fiji Navy, the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF), Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF), Fiji Military Forces, Fiji Police Force and Ministry of Defence, FRCS has developed a Maritime Safety Framework to collectively address and respond to the illegal and security activities arising in the maritime sector.

FRCS recognises that no single nation or agency can meet the challenges posed by a dynamic threat

environment, an expanding global economy, significant growth of imports and exports, and geopolitical changes. As such, the organisation is strengthening local, regional and international law enforcement cooperation through mutually beneficial partnerships that will help detect and disrupt border threats while facilitating the expedited flow of legal trade and travel.



Australian Border Force (ABF) Deputy Commissioner Tim Fitzgerald and FRCS CEO Udit Singh signs the 2024-2025 Joint Work Program between ABF and FRCS. Looking on are ABF's Counsellor, Pacific (Offshore) Network Superintendent Uriah Turner and FRCS Director Customs and Border Ms. Shelini Kumar.



Hong Kong, China

Leveraging Partnerships to Address the Emerging Drug Threats



In the face of formidable drug threats, Hong Kong Customs has remained steadfast and attached great importance to strengthening its longstanding relationship with its traditional partners in both law enforcement arena and business sector as well as exploring new collaborative opportunities by forming new alliances to beat the threats in a concerted effort.

Recognizing that solid partnerships must be built on mutual trust, understanding and support, Hong Kong Customs is making untiring efforts to achieve closer interactions and more frequent dialogues with our partners. Underpinning these objectives is a series of initiatives like organizing conferences and meetings, launching capacity building programmes and coordinating enforcement collaborations for law enforcement agencies (LEAs) as well as implementing liaison programmes with supplies chain stakeholders. All these initiatives are conducive to keeping our anti-drug networks more effective and long lasting.

Over 100 participants mainly from 40 LEAs in the A/P region and international organizations attended the Regional Customs High-level Drug Enforcement Forum in Hong Kong

Old and new partners in the Asia-Pacific (A/P) Region joined our first-ever Regional Customs High-level Drug Enforcement Forum in Hong Kong in February 2023 to plan ahead our actions for the emergence of new drug challenges in the post pandemic era. We re-connected or built a new tie with each other in a bid to reaffirm our united commitment to teaming up for suppressing the transnational drug trafficking. Besides, the 6th World Customs Organization (WCO) Global Canine Forum hosted by Hong Kong Customs in last December was another important event to share experience and foster canine actions to reinforce narcotics interdiction.





Hong Kong, China

Targeted drug enforcement results could not be achieved without required knowledge and skills. For enhancing our anti-drug expertise, Hong Kong Customs always seeks capacity building opportunities to boost the effectiveness of our collective efforts. Undoubtedly, the successful conclusion of the thematic regional drug enforcement workshop held by Hong Kong Customs last year greatly enriched participants' understanding of transnational drug trafficking trends and tackling practices, thereby heightening their professionalism.

Esprit de Corps could also be fostered through practical collaborations. The triumph of the regional joint operation codenamed MARKER, which was spearheaded by Hong Kong Customs and Regional

Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P) in the fall of 2023, signified the new height of teamwork among Customs and other LEA communities in the A/P region in eradicating the drug menace, as evident by the overwhelming amount of 2.84 tonnes seized after the 8-week operational period. Such an encouraging result owed much to the strong support from more than 30 agencies, particularly the new partners. Furthermore, our individual connections with one another LEAs have further been deepened when taking part in some bilateral and multilateral enforcement collaborations including mounting controlled delivery operations with fruitful outcomes.



Pre-operational online briefing for Operational MARKER co-organized by Hong Kong Customs and RILO A/P



In Operation "Yunzhan-duanliu" with the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong Customs neutralized a drug storage warehouse with confiscation of 264 kg of liquid methamphetamine in May 2024



Hong Kong, China

Apart from LEA collaborations, promoting Customs-Business partnerships are equally important to counter the misuse of legitimate supply chain for drug trafficking. In tandem with refining the existing cooperation with traditional logistics companies, Hong Kong Customs has further reached out to new emerging logistics intermediaries (such as parcel consolidators and co-working offices) in the e-commerce channel which are vulnerable to exploitation for smuggling the illicit drugs. After raising their awareness by delivering relevant training on latest trafficking trends and criminal clues, many of these new industry players have become our good partners aiding drug detection.



An international controlled delivery operation with Australian Border Force and Australia Federal Police resulted in confiscation of 240 kg of methamphetamine and three arrests in Hong Kong and one arrest in Australia in July 2023



Looking ahead, the uphill battle against cross-boundary drug trafficking will remain the top operational priority of Hong Kong Customs. In the capacity of the Vice-Chairperson for A/P Region of the WCO, Hong Kong Customs will continue to strengthen interagency collaborations and forge partnerships with the trade in order to cope with the ever-changing drug crimes in a more strategic and coordinated manner.

159 kg of assorted drugs seized by Hong Kong Customs in special operations with the assistance of parcel consolidators and co-working offices in 2023 and 2024



India

Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose

By Surjit Bhujabal, Anupam Prakash, Atul Singh, Yashvir Yadav

In today's interconnected world, customs departments play a pivotal role in facilitating global trade while ensuring security and compliance. The Indian Customs Department, a cornerstone of India's economic growth, has been at the forefront of this transformation.

In an era where global trade is evolving at breakneck speed, the Indian Customs is charting a bold new course by engaging both its time-honoured allies and innovative new partners. This dynamic approach isn't just about keeping pace with change - it's about setting the pace, ensuring that India remains a leader in the global trade arena.

Strengthening Ties with Traditional Allies

For years, the Indian Customs has worked closely with its traditional partners. Think of these partners as the department's "old friends"—from Partner Government Agencies (PGAs) and law enforcement like the Coast Guard and Border Security Force (BSF) to international customs organizations such as WCO and WTO. This network has been instrumental in developing tools like the Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade (SWIFT) which integrates various agencies into one streamlined system, making trade smoother and more efficient.

The department's commitment to these traditional collaborations is evident in its proactive role in international operations, such as Operation Thunderstorm and Project Tentacle launched under the leadership and guidance of WCO. These joint efforts tackle transnational issues like smuggling and counterfeiting, ensuring that India's borders remain secure and its trade routes reliable.

Embracing New Horizons with Innovation

But the Indian Customs Department isn't resting on its laurels. The future demands more than just maintaining old partnerships; it requires forging new ones. Enter the world of e-commerce, technology firms, and financial institutions—modern-day allies that are transforming the landscape of global trade.

Imagine a customs process that leverages cutting-edge technology to make your experience smoother and more secure. That's exactly what's happening. With partners in tech, the department is rolling out advanced systems like Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), ICEGATE 2.0 (Customs Automated System) and blockchain-based solutions through initiatives such as Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS). These innovations are not just about keeping up with the times; they're about staying ahead of the curve.

A Glimpse into the Future

Consider the India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES)—a marvel of modern-day trade facilitation. It allows seamless exchange of origin information between India and South Korea, facilitating better implementation of India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Similarly,

initiatives like real-time Pre-Arrival data exchange with Maldives and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for AEO with various countries such as USA, UAE etc are redefining what's possible in international trade.

And that's just the beginning. With advancements in AI and machine learning, Indian Customs is enhancing its risk management and compliance capabilities. A dedicated National Customs Targeting Centre (NCTC) has been set up to identify the risky consignments as part of Indian Customs focus on Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) of EXIM cargo. Training in cutting-edge technologies such as computer vision for better goods detection, and even the formation of K-9 squads for enhanced security, are all part of this forward-thinking strategy.

A Unified Vision for the Future

One of the focus areas for the Indian Customs has also been to improve the overall logistics efficiency through infrastructure development as envisioned in the flagship PM Gati Shakti Initiative of the Government of India. By aligning its goals with this ambitious project, the Indian Customs Department is not just participating in national growth; it's driving it. The creation and linkage of Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Container Freight Station (CFSs) and Air Freight Stations (AFS) with the key economic and industrial zones are set to transform India's logistics landscape, making it more efficient and interconnected.

As India strides towards its vision of becoming a developed economy by 2047, the Indian Customs Department stands at the forefront of this transformation. By balancing the strength of traditional partnerships with the promise of new collaborations, it is not only securing its place in the global trade arena but also paving the way for a future where trade is seamless, secure, and sustainable.

In this exciting journey, the Indian Customs Department is more than just a facilitator of trade—it's a trailblazer, ready for the future and geared for the "Viksit Bharat" (aka Developed India). As we navigate this evolving landscape, one thing is clear: with purpose-driven partnerships, the best is yet to come.

Indonesia

Engaging Palm Oil Exporter Laboratories with Indonesian Customs and Excise Laboratories to Facilitate Trade



Laboratory visit for eligibility check based on regulation requirement

By Ayu Perdana Kusumaningtyas Subandi and Sutrisna Indonesian Customs and Excise Laboratory of Surabaya Directorate General of Customs and Excise

Palm Oil: A Key Commodity Driving Indonesia's Economy

Elaeis guineensis, the scientific name for Palm oil, is becoming one of the most important commodities in the world's agricultural industry. Its tall trees and small fruits conceal enormous economic potential that might boost the GDPs of several producing nations, particularly Indonesia. Indonesia is essential to supplying the world's need for palm oil and its derivatives because it is the largest palm oil producer worldwide. Millions of Indonesians depend on this industry for their livelihoods in various fields, including export, processing, and farming. It also makes a major GDP contribution to the nation.

The Potential of Palm Oil in Indonesia

With 15,435.70 thousand hectares of oil palm plantations in 2023, Indonesia showed its enormous

potential in the agriculture sector. In addition to serving as a major source of raw materials for other sectors, the widespread presence of palm oil plants boosts employment and the national economy.

Crude palm oil (CPO), cooking oil, margarine, and other processed products are examples of Palm oil derivatives that have become essential export commodities for Indonesia. According to data from the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, the export volume of Indonesian palm oil products increased from 43.32 million tons in 2022 to 44.08 million tons in 2023. This surge reflects the high demand from international markets for palm oil derivatives produced in Indonesia. The continued growth in export volumes underscores the increasing reliance of global markets on Indonesian palm oil, making it a critical component of international trade.

Indonesia**Supervision and Testing Policies for Palm Oil Products**

With the increasing export volume of palm oil products, the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC) recognized the necessity to formulate particular policies that guarantee a seamless export procedure while maintaining compliance with applicable regulations. These policies are governed by the Minister of Finance Regulation Number 22/PMK.04/2019 concerning the export regulation for palm oil, Crude Palm Oil (CPO), and their derivatives. Additionally, export procedures are further regulated through the Directorate General of Customs and Excise Regulation number PER-8/BC/2020 and PER-11/BC/2023 regarding Export Procedures for Palm Oil, Crude Palm Oil (CPO) and its Derivative Products.

Export-oriented palm oil products require physical inspections following this policy framework. Exporters must, however, submit laboratory test results for palm oil and its derivatives before the export procedure starts if they do not request a physical inspection. These tests can be conducted at customs and excise laboratories or exporter laboratories which the customs and excise service office acknowledges. Specifically, for packaged palm oil products, exporters can perform self-testing, which is expected to improve efficiency in terms of cost and time. This flexibility is essential in reducing bottlenecks at export points, ensuring that products reach global markets without unnecessary delays.

Self-Examination: Enhancing Export Efficiency

Exporters must first register their laboratories with the local Customs and Excise office to conduct self-testing. After registration, the office will collaborate with Customs and Excise laboratories to assess the laboratories' eligibility through document reviews and

field inspection. The permit to conduct self-testing will be granted based on the recommendation made by Customs and Excise laboratories.

The ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation requirements must be fulfilled by laboratories that are allowed to conduct self-testing. This accreditation ensures the laboratory has internationally recognized competency in testing palm oil products and their derivatives. With this accreditation, the laboratory can assure the accuracy and validity of the test results according to the necessary parameters. Therefore, exporters can enhance export efficiency in terms of cost and time.

Based on data from the Indonesia Foreign Trade Statistics Exports 2023, the export volume of packaged palm oil products significantly increased, from 1,147,597,493 kilograms in 2022 to 1,654,779,531 kilograms in 2023. This upward trend indicates that the implemented policies have successfully assisted exporters in enhancing the efficiency of the palm oil trade. These results demonstrate that the policies have effectively supported the growth of Indonesia's palm oil product exports. The positive outcomes reflect the synergy between government policies and industry practices, positioning Indonesia as a reliable supplier in the global palm oil market.


 Indonesia

Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

Granting self-testing authorization does not imply a termination of monitoring. On the contrary, this authorization must be followed by continuous monitoring and evaluation by Customs and Excise authorities. Routine monitoring ensures that laboratories granted this authority comply with established standards, procedures, and regulations. Such oversight is crucial in safeguarding the reputation of Indonesian palm oil products on the world stage, ensuring they meet the stringent quality and safety standards international buyers require. It aims to maintain the integrity of the export process and ensure that products sent to international markets meet high-quality standards.

Collaboration and Innovation in Palm Oil Exports

Currently, six autonomous exporter laboratories for palm oil export products and their derivatives operate within the working areas of the Customs and Excise Laboratories in Surabaya, Jakarta, and Medan. This policy aims to expedite export services, enhance customs supervision, and

strengthen collaboration between customs authorities and stakeholders to facilitate trade and industrial assistance. With self-testing conducted in the exporters' laboratories, cost and time efficiency in the export process can be achieved, ultimately increasing the competitiveness of Indonesian palm oil products in the global market. The success of these autonomous laboratories serves as a model for other sectors, demonstrating how public-private partnerships can drive efficiency and innovation in trade.

Palm oil is not merely an agricultural commodity but an economic pillar supporting millions of people and playing a significant role in international trade. Through innovative policies and strict supervision, Indonesia strives to continue leading this industry while ensuring the products meet international standards and benefit all parties involved economically. As global demand for sustainable and ethically produced palm oil grows, Indonesia's commitment to maintaining high standards will be vital to sustaining its market leadership.



Monitoring and evaluation of exporters' laboratories.



New Zealand

Combining forces to target supply chain infiltration



Border agencies from around the world converged at Melbourne Airport from 9-13 September to counter criminal infiltration of international supply chains.

The Australian Border Force (ABF) hosted officers from the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and US Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) for a week of training, tradecraft and capability-building to tackle the threats posed by insiders within the aviation environment.

Highlights of the week included several practical training exercises focused on aircraft search techniques allowing agencies to learn from each other's experience.

When not on the tarmac, officers discussed intelligence gathering, concealment methods, tools and technologies, and current and emerging threats to borders.

Officers also visited the ABF's detector dog facility, where detector dogs are bred and trained, some of which go on to work internationally. Here they re-created a warrant scenario to demonstrate tools and technologies, including the detector dogs and mobile x-ray.

ABF Inspector Costas Karatzas said the week allowed experts in this field to come together and further the world's best practice to combat criminal infiltration.

"Commercial aviation isn't in the business of drug trafficking, it is the few bad actors who are our target," ABF Inspector Karatzas said.

"Criminals attempt to recruit, exploit or coerce trusted insiders, within global supply chains, for the sole purpose of advancing their illicit drug trafficking ventures. Border agencies are being tested in ways we have never been tested before."

"Continued international collaboration is crucial to staying a step ahead of crime syndicates and uphold Australia's border as a hostile environment for attempts to import illegal goods."

Attending on behalf of New Zealand Customs was Counsellor Canberra, Chris Howley, who said close collaboration with key partners is crucial to stay ahead of emerging threats, especially in the aviation sector.

"The dynamic nature of the aviation environment calls for the latest training for our officers and maintaining high alert over growing risks, including insider threats.

"We know that transnational organised crime is determined to infiltrate supply chains and is actively recruiting workers within airports to manipulate the movement of goods, circumvent border controls and work with local criminal groups to smuggle prohibited goods into our communities.



New Zealand

“When our agencies collaborate, operate and share information, we mitigate the risk posed by these threats.”

Chris said that two NZCS Supervising Customs Officers, Paul Osborne and Matt Loader, presented on the work the agency is doing to combat trusted insider threats and build effective cooperation with industry across the supply chain. Part of that involves working alongside businesses to better understand their processes and identify key people who can monitor and report suspicious activity.

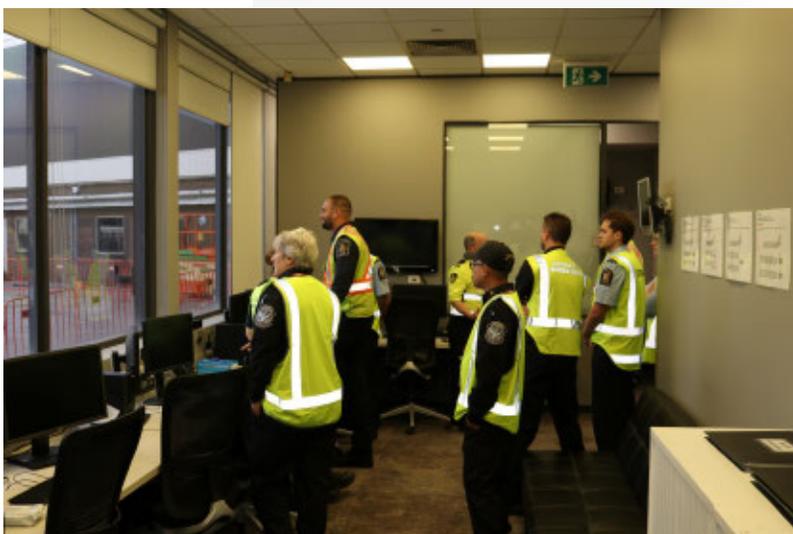
“Matt and Paul were able to share some of the success and learnings that our Border Protect team has achieved from what it’s doing within the supply chain to tackle criminal infiltration.”

Canada Border Services Agency, Director General of

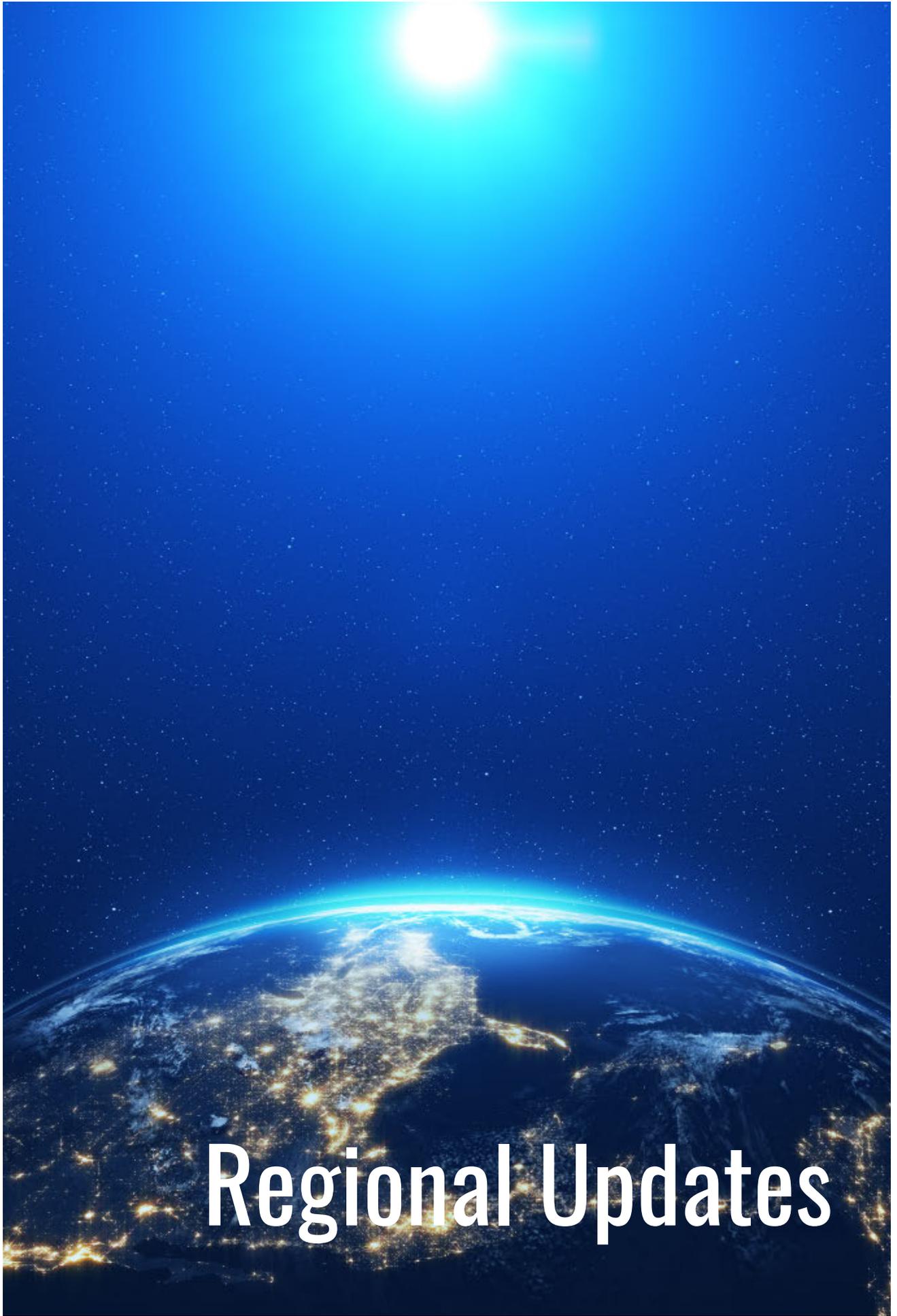
International Policy, Partnerships and Operations, Natasha Manji, said “CBSA is proud to work closely with our international partners to improve border security at home and abroad.”

“By combining our efforts and expertise, we are positioning ourselves to have the upper hand against the existing and emerging threats that transcend borders.”

U.S. Customs and Border Protection San Francisco Field Office, Field Operations Director, David A. Salazar said “we are honored to join forces with our Australian, New Zealand and Canadian counterparts and other international partners to share best practices in a continuing effort to build a resilient network that safeguards our borders while facilitating legitimate trade and travel.”



Images from the week of international collaboration featuring officers from Australian Border Force, New Zealand Customs Service, Canada Border Services Agency and U.S. Customs and Border Protection at Melbourne Airport, Australia. Highlights from the week included several practical training exercises focused on aircraft search techniques.



Regional Updates



Hong Kong, China

34th Session of the World Customs Organization Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points Meeting, Hong Kong, China



Hong Kong Customs, starting 22 October 2024, held the 34th Session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia/Pacific (A/P) Regional Contact Points (RCP) Meeting for four consecutive days and concluded successfully on 25 October 2024 in Hong Kong, China.

This four-day meeting is the first large-scale regional event hosted by Hong Kong Customs since its assumption of the Vice-Chairpersonship in July this year, which gathered more than 70 representatives from A/P customs administrations as well as from the WCO's regional entities. The meeting included a series

of thematic presentations and discussions focusing on A/P regional concerns. Participants explored customs initiatives, enforcement strategies and training experiences from diverse perspectives, while fostering co-operation and information sharing among A/P members.



Hong Kong, China



Photo shows the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho (front row, centre), other attending Hong Kong Customs officers and representatives of the A/P members and regional entities

The meeting started with a welcoming speech delivered on 22 October by the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho, in the capacity of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region (APVC). Ms Ho highlighted that the meeting provided an important platform for the A/P members and regional entities to discuss and formulate global policies for the world customs community. Members

were able to share ideas and experience, suggest customs initiatives, and stay updated with recent customs developments. She hoped the commitment and dedication of the A/P family would facilitate regional co-operation to respond to the evolving global challenges. Ms Ho also outlined APVC's workplan for the coming two years.



WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region, Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise HO



Hong Kong, China

The meeting came to an end on 25 October 2024. In her concluding remarks, Ms Ho reckoned that the four-day meeting had yielded fruitful results. Firstly, the A/P members re-affirmed the regional development strategies for the next two years. Secondly, an innovative concept of utilising block-chain technology to develop a validation platform for regional development was explored during the meeting. Lastly, in-depth discussions on reviewing regional policies were also conducted at the meeting. She expressed appreciation to all delegates for their active participation, insightful contributions, and unwavering commitment to driving positive changes in regional development, making the meeting a resounding success.

Head of Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region, Assistant Commissioner (WCO) of Customs and Excise, Mr LI Kin-kei



Photo shows representatives from A/P customs administrations and the WCO's regional entities at the meeting



India

Turning the grass greener on this side as well



By Ms Neetisha Verma, Senior Technical Officer (International Customs Division) and
Mr. Ghanshyam Jeph, Deputy Director
Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Government of India

Though Indian Customs had been using Sperry systems for data entry purposes since the 1980s, the automation of processes began in 1995, with the introduction of Indian Customs EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) System (ICES) in New Delhi, followed by the introduction of a web portal (ICEGATE) in 2003 and a Risk Management System (RMS) in 2006.

The Consolidation of IT infrastructure in 2011, allowed rapid expansion to locations across the country. Today, manual processing has been phased out and electronic processing is enabled in 254 Customs locations, which handle more than 99 per cent of the trade of the country.

In 2016, as a part of the Ease of Doing Business initiative to provide a single interface for all border clearance, the Single Window Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT) was introduced to bring together nine separate documents into a single import declaration, integrated risk assessment and electronic clearance from Partner Government Agencies (PGAs). This was followed by the introduction of an online document

repository (eSANCHIT) in 2018, which enabled paperless processing and laid the path for further transformational reforms.

In 2019, the Turant Customs programme was introduced as a next generation reform to transform the Customs clearance processes into a faceless, contactless and paperless experience for the taxpayers. After the introduction of web-based goods registration and the automated clearance functionality, Faceless Assessment was implemented in 2020, to provide anonymity and specialisation in Customs assessment by delinking the geographical limitations, with the aid of technology.

To transform the cross-border clearance ecosystem through efficient, transparent, risk based, coordinated, digital, seamless and technology driven procedures, which are supported by state-of-the-art seaports, airports, land border crossings, rail, road and other logistics infrastructure – this was the vision set out in the National Trade Facilitation Action (2020-23) by India.



India

When India acceded to the WTO TFA in 2016, in pursuance of its letter and spirit, one of the endeavours that was taken up by her on accession was to enter into or maintain bilateral, plurilateral, or regional agreement for sharing or exchange of customs information and data, including on a secure and rapid basis, such as, on an automatic basis or in advance of the arrival of the consignment.

In its quest to move towards a paperless Customs ecosystem and in the letter and spirit of its TFA commitments, Indian Customs have taken up various data exchange initiatives, namely, exchange of pre-arrival Customs data as well as electronic origin data exchange system.

AUTOMATED EXCHANGE OF PRE-ARRIVAL CUSTOMS DATA:

Automated exchange of trade information between Customs administrations is a pioneer initiative of CBIC aimed at facilitating trade, risk management and tax compliance. It aims at curbing the menace of trade mis-invoicing, which in turn would result in:

- (a) revenue augmentation
- (b) aid the global war against terror financing, transnational crime and money laundering
- (c) faster Customs clearances leading to greater trade facilitation and, thereby, boosting trade
- (d) serving as a prerequisite asset in bilateral/multilateral agreements

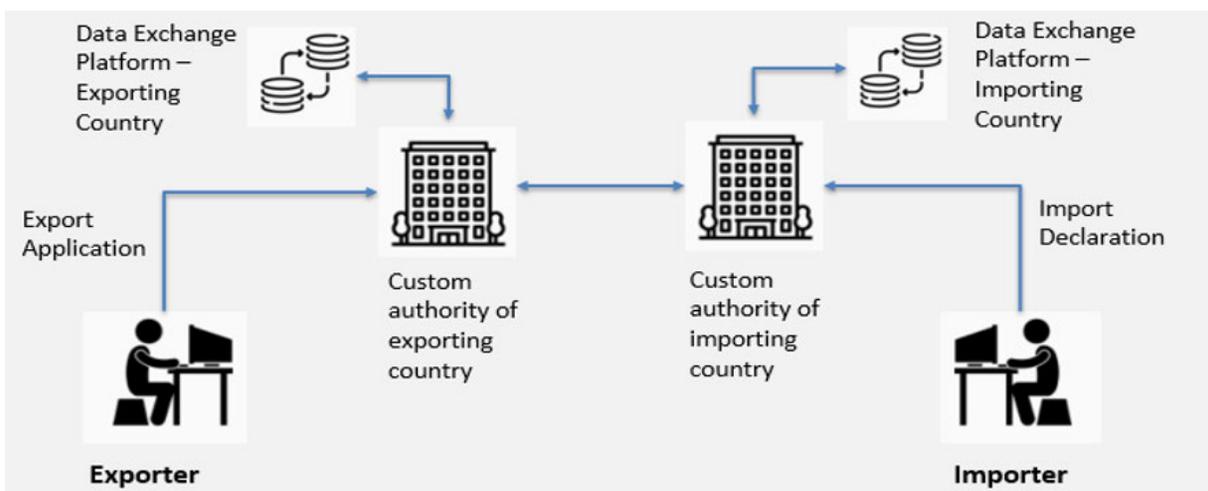
All of the above are genuine global concerns that have been echoed at various multilateral fora, including WCO, G20 and OECD by many countries, including India.

It may be recalled that Hon'ble Prime Minister of India's call for global cooperation to curb cross border tax evasion and unearthing black money during the G20 Summit, in Australia (2014), was supported by many participating countries and resultantly, G20 endorsed an OECD proposal for a global model for automatic exchange of information among financial institutions.

Building on this theme, CBIC has launched the Pilot Project on Exchange of Pre-arrival Customs data with Maldives in 2021. Also, similar engagement with Uzbekistan (MoU signed in 2018) is at an advanced stage. Further, CBIC is in the process of exploring the possibility of furthering engagements with other bilateral partners in this regard. If capitalized well, this initiative has the potential to serve as a global template for automated exchange of information.

Modality

It would entail electronic transmission of selected data fields from the export declarations as soon as customs clearance is allowed by the exporting country. The importing side will use the data so received to authenticate the corresponding import declarations, as and when they are filed. As a first step, this would be taken up on a pilot basis for a limited period, which would help in providing proof of concept and gaining expertise. Technical details of data transmission can be discussed between IT teams of the two sides and finalized through signing of a mutually agreed Integration Document. The following diagram explains the business flow for implementing data exchange platform project:





ELECTRONIC ORIGIN DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM:

Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) envisages electronic exchange of Certificates of Origin (CoO) information between Customs administrations of two countries. The objective is to electronically transmit and receive origin-related information with respect to goods traded between the two countries under a preferential trade agreement.

The EODES project aims to achieve the following:

- (i) **Trade Facilitation** – Currently, original copy of CoO is required for preferential tariff treatment, which is often received from the exporting country after physical arrival of the goods. With EODES, an electronic copy of CoO would be used, which would save the waiting time for receiving the original copy of CoO.
- (ii) **Efficient Verification** – The present system requires manual comparison of seals and signatures on the CoO with the specimens provided, resulting in delays in customs clearance. Direct transmission of origin data from exporting country will do away with the need to manually verify the CoO.
- (iii) **Better Utilization of Administrative Resources** – Currently, it is difficult for the exporting country (with multiple agencies issuing CoO) to communicate the details of a new person authorized to issue a CoO to the trading partners. Electronic transmission of data would do away with such requirement and also prevent chances of copies of such specimens being misused.

Business Process Workflow

The scope of the project is to enable the electronic data transmission and automated verification of CoO received from exporting countries. The business process workflow for the EODES project is as follows:

(i) Exporter –

- Exporter applies for e-CoO with a CoO issuing agency.
- CoO issuing agency of exporting country issues e-CoO to the exporter and also transmits the data of e-CoO to Customs authority of exporting country.
- Customs authority of exporting country transmits e-CoO data to the Customs authority of importing country.
- Exporter provides a copy or data elements of e-CoO to the importer, to be used at the time of filing import declaration in the importing country.

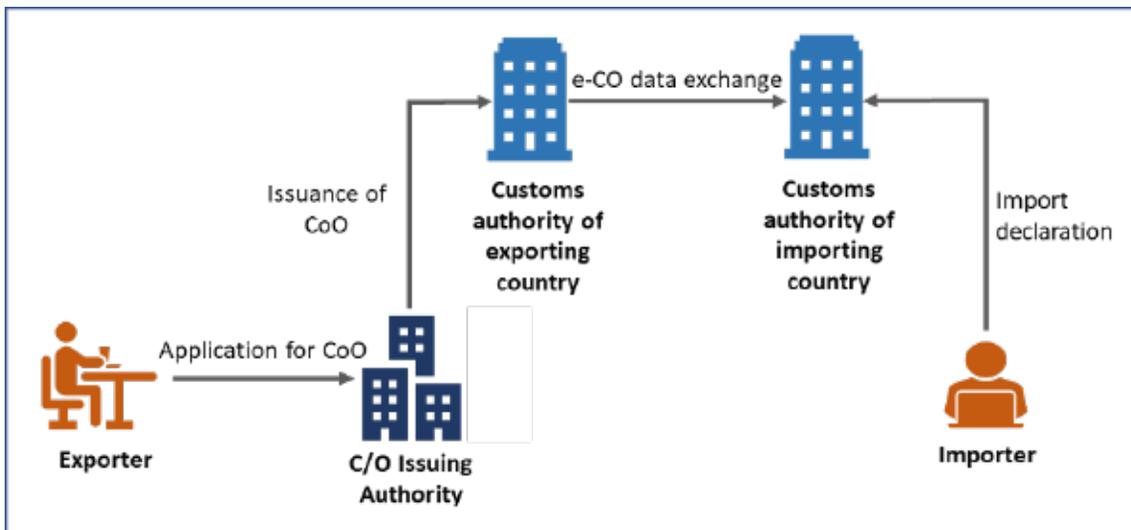
(ii) Importer –

- Customs authority of importing country receives the data of e-CoO from exporting country.
- While filing the import declaration, the importer shall be required to enter the data elements of eCoO in the import declaration.



India

- The declaration made by the importer will be validated with the data of eCoO, received from the exporting country. The following diagram explains the business flow for implementing data exchange platform project:



In pursuance of this, CBIC has recently (December 2023) launched the Electronic Origin Data Exchange System with Republic of Korea. Also, similar engagement with Singapore is at an advanced stage. Further, CBIC is in the process of exploring the possibility of furthering engagements with other bilateral/multilateral partners in this regard.

Data Security

A critical aspect of this data security framework is data encryption, where information is encoded and accessible only to authorized users possessing the correct encryption key. This encrypted data, known as ciphertext, acts as a formidable barrier against unauthorized access. The transmission of the payload is facilitated through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), with a stringent requirement for HTTPS protection. By employing Transport Layer Security (TLS) or Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), the protocol identifies and safeguards against potential security risks, including message tampering, interception, and forgery.

To further fortify the data exchange process, access is restricted based on IP addresses, bolstering security by permitting API calls only from authorized locations. Concurrently, the invocation of services necessitates a robust User ID and Password mechanism, adding an additional layer of authentication to the exchange.

As we navigate the complexities of international data sharing, this comprehensive security approach ensures that the confidentiality, integrity, and authenticity of transmitted information remain paramount. The goal is to stay informed and aligned with evolving security standards to stay one step ahead in safeguarding cross-border data exchanges.

Conclusion

Very often the problem is not the absence of data but its abundance and, more importantly, the inability to utilize this huge plethora of data available with government bodies towards a specific and quantifiable goal. The above-mentioned initiatives of Indian Customs are a humble start towards achieving end to end data transparency and giving shape to the WCO concept of 'Globally Networked Customs'.

The data exchange initiatives of Indian Customs is yet another addition to the universe of green reforms being undertaken by it, such as the phasing out of paper documentation towards processing of electronic documents, greater reliance on electronic modes of communication, focus on transparency and accessibility and creation of an environment conducive for trade and industry to grow so that it can ignite innovation and usher economic growth.



India

Basel Convention and Green Customs: India's Experience

As a member of the World Customs Organization, India works in tandem with the 180+ member administrations to continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Customs in matters related to environmental protection and sustainability. This includes implementing the various international treaties and conventions related to the environment, including the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.

Background

India is a signatory to the Basel Convention which was adopted in 1989 and came into force in 1992. Article 8 of the Convention makes it the duty of an exporting state to re-import within 90 days if waste cannot be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. Article 9 obligates the state of import to dispose of illegally trafficked waste in an environmentally sound manner within 30 days.

The Convention requires countries to ensure that both hazardous wastes and hazardous recyclable materials are managed in an environmentally sound manner. As a signatory, India has created a national law enforcement system and legal liability mechanism for the private sector. Being a convention related to transboundary movement, it enhances the significance of the role of Customs as a regulatory body.

Legal and Policy Landscape in India

India actively participates in international efforts for Green Customs and aligns its policies with the Basel Convention. To this effect, India has taken steps to regulate the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes to safeguard its environment. By focusing efforts on monitoring hazardous waste imports and exports across borders, India aims to fulfill its obligations under the international agreement of controlling shipments of and preventing dumping of

toxic substances. Implementation of these measures demonstrates India's commitment to preventing its land and people from hazardous waste trafficking through aligned national policies and processes.

The convention is largely enforced through:

- Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, as amended; and
- Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022.

Hazardous waste was first regulated in 1989 through the Hazardous Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1989, which were subsequently amended in 2008 to incorporate the provisions of the Basel Convention and again in 2016. The Hazardous Waste Management regulations have undergone sea change since their first promulgation in 1989 to periodically address the requirements of various stakeholders. While Customs implements the provisions related to hazardous waste at the borders, hazardous waste is regulated by the following agencies within India:

- *Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India*
- *Central Pollution Control Board*
- *State Pollution Control Boards*
- *Pollution Control Committees*

The Hazardous Substances Management Division is the nodal point within the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, for management of chemical emergencies and hazardous substances. The main objective of the Division is to promote safe management and use of hazardous substances including hazardous chemicals and hazardous wastes to avoid damage to health and environment. The Division is also the nodal point for the Basel Convention.



India

The disposal of hazardous waste is accomplished in accordance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India of 2003. The Apex Court directed that such wastes are to be categorized as either those that are banned or those that are regulated. The waste in the banned category should be either re-exported (if permissible) or destroyed at the risk, cost, and consequence of the importer.

Indian Customs at the Forefront

In the area of Customs enforcement, the illicit trafficking of goods hazardous to the environment is a well recognised global problem. This represents an organized transnational crime, often orchestrated by well-established criminal networks. Enforcement authorities of CBIC such as the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and various Customs formations frequently report seizures related to smuggling of environmentally hazardous goods, including e-waste. A large number of cases reported by Customs formations involve seizures of commercial quantities of used laptops and refurbished phones from air passengers. Though seizure value is low in such cases, the frequency and number of instances is high.

Some significant cases detected by DRI in the area of hazardous goods in 2022-23 are as follows:

1. Hazardous "cathode pot lining" imported without license and falsely declared as "Anthracite carbon"
2. Municipal solid waste such as used PET bottles, waste food paper/plastic parcels, broken glass bottles, waste plastic/paper containers etc. weighing 121.97 MT misdeclared as "Waste Paper - News & Pams"
3. Concealed Pyrotechnic Fireworks (3, 63, 240 pieces with estimated value of Rs. 3.6 Crores) in the guise of declaration as "Paper Roll"
4. Illicit e-waste import consignment misdeclared as "Frame Unit for processing machine (PC Barebone)" being imported with proper authorization from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and upon inspection found to contain old and used LED panels for computer monitors.

In addition, the National Customs Targeting Centre (NCTC) of CBIC routinely alerts the field formations on risks associated with consignments related to possible hazardous cargo, leading to seizures across various

ports. This adds to and further enhances the constant vigil by Indian Customs.

Another aspect that Indian Customs handles in a dynamic and proactive manner is the disposal of hazardous goods. The disposal of all types of uncleared or unclaimed or seized hazardous cargo consignments, including chemicals, electronic wastes etc. is a continuing exercise undertaken across Customs locations in coordination with other regulatory authorities.

Seized hazardous goods need to go through a quasi-judicial process which also has appeal provisions, which tends to make the disposal process take more time. Hence, in October 2020, India eased the process for disposal of seized hazardous goods, by making enablement in Section 110 (1A) of Customs Act 1962 by which such goods can be disposed of even before adjudication. Further, by March 2021, all the ports were freed of remaining metallic scrap material segments regarded as remnants of shells/war materials by way of a special operation named *Visphotak Mukht Bandargah* (Explosives-Free Port) undertaken in close coordination with other ministries. CBIC continuously monitors the disposal of hazardous goods and recently undertook a targeted exercise in the matter at all ports. As a result of coordinated efforts, 2592 consignments of hazardous cargo pending on 01.08.2020 were disposed of, leading to only 4 consignments remaining pending for disposal by April 2023.

Conclusion

Indian Customs works with a stance of zero-tolerance towards environment related matters, especially in the area of hazardous waste trade which has the potential of causing widespread and long term damage to the social and economic health of a nation. The work of CBIC includes implementing India's legal framework associated with Basel Convention and ensuring deterrence against illicit trade in hazardous cargo and prioritized disposal of such cargo wherever necessary.

Contributors:

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2. **Mr. Vivek Kumar**, Deputy Commissioner, WCO Cell, CBIC

Indonesia

Effectiveness of the GScan X-Ray Cargo Scanner at Tanjung Priok Port, Indonesia



By Endrah Ilham Purna Irawan, Customs of Tanjung Priok

The introduction of Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology, like the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner, at Tanjung Priok Port Customs has significantly improved how physical inspections of goods are done. This change follows the SAFE Framework from the World Customs Organization, which guides member countries on securing and facilitating global trade through better information, risk management, and inspection methods. With increasing cargo volumes and a shortage of staff due to a policy reducing human resources, Tanjung Priok Customs needed a way to speed up inspections without increasing costs. The solution was to use rapid screening technology, which can detect goods quickly and efficiently. The G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner has made inspections more effective by allowing quick and accurate scanning of goods without opening packages. This tool helps meet legal requirements and manage risks better. Despite its high cost, the scanner is seen as a good investment for improving national security and economic efficiency. Key

benefits of the X-ray scanner include:

- Better Performance: It speeds up inspections and helps meet targets with fewer resources.
- Enhanced Risk Management: It improves oversight and reduces potential fraud by providing better data and allowing for more accurate inspections.
- Improved Efficiency: The scanner helps speed up the clearance process and enhances the overall inspection process.

Overall, the use of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner has brought positive changes to the customs operations at Tanjung Priok, making inspections faster and more effective while supporting better risk management and compliance with regulations.

Indonesia**Conditions Before the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner Machine**

The G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner machine became available and ready for operation in 2022 to assist Customs in carrying out the inspection and supervision process more effectively and efficiently. In fact, the use of x-ray machines is not new to Tanjung Priok Customs, as there were previously three gamma-ray machines and one x-ray machine used for supervision. However, these three gamma-ray machines were less suitable for import inspections because their scanning quality was not detailed enough, while the imported goods entering Tanjung Priok Port were highly varied. Therefore, gamma-ray machines were mostly used for export commodities, which required simpler supervision.

The last x-ray machine, the Hi Co x-ray, which had been in use for more than 20 years, is now no longer functional due to its deteriorated condition and the high cost of repairs. This was because of the need for foreign

technicians and spare parts from Germany. The previous inspection process, based on PMK number 225 of 2015, which regulated physical inspections by unloading the entire contents of the container (stripping), took time due to resource limitations such as loading and unloading equipment, cranes, forklifts, storage yards, and inspecting personnel.

The head of Tanjung Priok Customs exercised discretion by introducing the corridor mechanism, which is a partial stripping process that uses risk management and internal applications to determine the part of the container that needs to be inspected and unloaded. Another discretion was the appointment of inspection officers, which could not be done on a FIFO (drop box) basis due to the geographical conditions and work environment at Tanjung Priok Port.





Indonesia

The previous regulations did not adopt x-ray machines as an auxiliary tool for physical inspections of red-line goods, so various challenges were encountered. Based on interviews with employees in the inspection department, it was revealed that there were several challenges, including difficult implementation, as it required optimal stripping, which was hard to achieve at Tanjung Priok Customs due to the varying import volumes compared to other Customs offices. In addition, container risk management relied solely on physical inspection officers in the field, with minimal direct supervision, increasing the potential for agreements and fraud since supervision was conducted by only one party.

Another challenge is the lack of auditable performance standards by both internal and external parties related to ISO, due to the difficulty of applying general measurement standards at Tanjung Priok Customs. The measurement tools used apply to all Customs offices in Indonesia. This includes credit scores for the number of documents inspected by functional officers, which requires extraordinary effort to implement at Tanjung Priok Customs, while it is easier to apply in other Customs offices. Another issue is the numerous findings from audits conducted by the Audit Board of Indonesia (BPK) and the Inspectorate General (ITJEN) regarding many manual processes due to the different standards being used. External audits use the standards of PMK number 225 of 2015, while work processes follow the discretion policies set by the Head of Tanjung Priok Customs.

Additionally, many service users, such as importers and goods owners, have reported delays in the inspection process. Lastly, there is still no system in place for monitoring the process from start to finish, which is crucial for importers or goods owners. The discretion exercised by the Head of Tanjung Priok

Customs regarding the corridor mechanism and the drop box system is not yet regulated, but it helps prevent larger issues such as long congestion at the port, rising logistics costs, and minimizing dwelling time. Although this discretion has positive impacts on society, the economy, and logistics, it has yet to be accommodated by the current regulations.

Post-Implementation of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner

The implementation of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner at Tanjung Priok Customs has significantly improved the efficiency of the physical inspection process. Customs officers have stated that the G Scan machine is crucial for speeding up physical inspections. The integration between physical inspection officers and X-ray analysts has increased the efficiency of this machine. The G Scan machine has become a catalyst for changes in the workflow, especially in the inspection of red-line imported goods.

Field Studies and New Regulations

Tanjung Priok Customs has served as a field study site for the Directorate of Technical Affairs, Headquarters of the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC), before issuing technical guidelines derived from PMK 185 of 2022, specifically PER 1 BC of 2023. This regulation governs the use of X-ray machines for preliminary inspections and as a replacement for physical inspections.

Post-Implementation of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner and the Enforcement of PMK Number 185 of 2022

After the implementation of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner and the enforcement of the PMK number 185 of 2022, several important changes occurred in the workflow at the Tanjung Priok Main Customs Office. The objectives of the

Indonesia

inspection and the legal basis were updated to reflect the use of X-ray technology in the work procedures. Additionally, new procedures were added by considering the results of X-ray scans, enabling more accurate and faster identification of goods without having to open the packaging. The inspection mechanism was also restructured, with the introduction of a corridor-free system that accelerates the inspection process. Professional judgment has become more crucial in making inspection decisions based on scan results and predetermined risk parameters. Internal systems and workflows were updated to support a more efficient process integrated with the new technology. This implementation was directed by the Head of Tanjung Priok Customs to ensure the acceleration of physical inspections and the optimization of scanner use according to the parameters set out in the regulations.

The Head of Tanjung Priok Customs directed the acceleration of physical inspections by utilizing container scanners in accordance with the regulations. The Head of the Administrative Section for Internal Compliance, Mr. Syahril, emphasized the importance of internal applications to support the acceleration of inspections and reporting. Functional Document Inspector (PFPD), Mr. Suryono, reminded that the parameters used should not be seen as a form of intervention but as a decision-making tool for inspectors based on the weighting in the ISK.

The Head of Enforcement Section, Mr. Henki, explained that the directive from the Head of Office is to ensure that the use of X-rays has a significant impact on the acceleration of physical inspections. The acceleration parameters include importer profiles, commodities, and other parameters. The Head of Import Goods Physical Inspection Section, Mr. Duto

Purno Aji, will form an acceleration team. IT Team Leader, Mr. Rohmad, added that parameters such as MITA/AEO, the number of goods that can be counted without opening the packaging, and scanner analysis results will be included in the internal application. Therefore, the implementation of the G Scan machine and the PMK 185 of 2022 regulations has resulted in faster and more efficient inspection processes, supporting the smooth customs process and the economy.

The optimization of the X-ray machines at Tanjung Priok Customs has had a significant impact in addressing previous challenges. First, the PMK regulations, which were initially difficult to implement, became more feasible due to changes that adapted to new technology. Second, risk management related to goods has been improved, as better information and data flow are provided to related units, enabling dual supervision and minimizing the potential for fraud by officers thanks to early warnings known to many parties. Third, ISO work standards, which were previously absent from the Physical Inspector's Work Instructions (ISK) or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), have now begun to be implemented, although still limited to one type of goods, to ensure faster inspections. Fourth, findings from the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) and the Inspectorate General (ITJEN) related to the physical inspection process have decreased, so BPK and ITJEN inspections are now more focused on the final work results and post-physical inspection processes, such as PFPD studies, and findings from internal units are more focused on evaluating the implementation of newly applied ISO performance standards. Lastly, complaints from service users have decreased, reflecting an improvement in efficiency and transparency in the inspection process.



Indonesia

The G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner machine has only been used at Tanjung Priok Type A Customs since 2022, requiring further research to test its effectiveness. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner technology on organizational performance using a Balanced Scorecard analysis. The Balanced Scorecard also relates to the alignment between short-term and long-term goals and communicates the strategic plan to all members of the organization. There are several perspectives in the Balanced Scorecard analysis, including the customer perspective, internal innovation, learning, and financial perspectives. There are several perspectives on the implementation of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner at Tanjung Priok Customs:

Stakeholder Perspective

The procurement of the X-ray machine supports the implementation of PMK number 185 of 2022, enhancing protection against narcotics and restricted/prohibited goods, as well as optimizing state revenue. This machine requires work instructions (ISK) to explain the container scanning process and the distribution of scan result data (RHAT). The issuance of PER-1 BC of 2023, as a derivative of PMK 185 of 2022, has helped integrate X-ray results into physical inspections, PFPD, and enforcement areas. The twice-adjusted ISK shows the need for revisions to accommodate these changes, ensuring more effective and efficient inspections.

Internal Process Perspective

Risk management for goods has improved with better information flow, dual supervision, and minimized potential fraud. The innovation in physical inspection processes continues to be refined through ISK

improvements and regular monitoring. The internalization and assistance of risk management ensure comprehensive understanding among staff, with Tanjung Priok Customs receiving the highest award in risk management.

Customer Perspective

ISO work standards, which were previously absent, are now applied in the new ISK for the inspection of single-type goods, increasing efficiency and productivity despite the reduced number of staff. The number of documents inspected has increased, reflecting improved performance. The implementation of the new ISK also ensures faster physical inspections with ISO standards, supporting customer satisfaction.

Learning and Growth Perspective

BPK and ITJEN findings related to physical inspection processes have decreased, with a focus now on evaluating the implementation of new ISO performance standards. Intensive training on the use of X-ray machines and related administrative understanding is highly needed, although training on physical inspection analysis remains limited. Enhancing staff competency is important for legal compliance and career development.

Financial Perspective

Customer complaints have decreased, indicating improved satisfaction. The integration of X-ray scan results with the SLIM application speeds up data distribution, supporting a more efficient workflow. The procurement of X-ray machines in collaboration with TPFT Graha Segara and Billion Prima Sdn Bhd benefits both parties, with positive financial impacts and increased inspection speed as feedback for service users.


 Indonesia

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The introduction of the G Scan Cargo X-ray Scanner at Tanjung Priok Customs has led to several positive changes. The scanner has greatly improved the efficiency of physical cargo inspections by quickly and accurately identifying goods without needing to open packages, thus saving time and boosting productivity.

Key Impacts

- *Stakeholders:* The X-ray machine supports new regulations, improves protection against prohibited goods, and helps optimize state revenue.
- *Internal Processes:* Better risk management and dual oversight have reduced fraud.
- *Customers:* The machine has improved service standards and inspection speed with the use of ISO standards.
- *Staff Development:* There has been an increase in training, though more focus is needed on inspection analysis.

- *Financial Benefits:* The machine has led to more efficient work processes and fewer complaints, enhancing customer satisfaction.

Recommendations:

1. *Training:* Provide ongoing training for staff to ensure they fully understand the new technology.
2. *Evaluation:* Regularly review and improve work processes and the use of the X-ray machine.
3. *Update Regulations:* Align regulations and procedures with technological advancements.
4. *Collaboration:* Work with external partners to support ongoing operations and technological upgrades.

These steps will help further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs operations.





Sri Lanka

Role of Port Cities in Global Trade and Sri Lanka's Future



By A.D.Nilanga, Assistant Superintendent of Customs, Sri Lanka Customs

This article explores the historical and modern significance of port cities, from ancient Alexandria to Dubai, highlighting their role in global trade and economic development. It discusses Sri Lanka's Port City and emphasizes the need for Sri Lanka Customs to adopt advanced technologies to fully realize its potential.



Harbour of Alexandria

Founded in 331 BC by Alexander the Great, Alexandria was a grand Hellenistic city that served as Egypt's capital for over 900 years, becoming a renowned destination for travelers from across the civilized world. The strategic location of Alexandria and its ports in ancient times is undeniable. Positioned along the vital sea route between the East and West, Alexandria was chosen to establish the new capital, envisioning it as a central hub connecting the entire world. Several history textbooks describe how vast quantities of merchandise, especially pepper and

spices, passed through the bustling customs house along the Alexandrian shore. With its strategic location on the Mediterranean, the city's bustling harbor, guided by the iconic Pharos lighthouse, facilitated extensive trade, attracting merchants from across the globe. Alexandria became a melting pot of cultures, fostering intellectual exchange and making it the seat of learning and scholarship, exemplified by its legendary library. Known as the "Bride of the Mediterranean," the city's ports not only supported its economy but also cemented its reputation as a significant cultural and political center.

Modern port cities like Dubai in the UAE have played a pivotal role in shaping the country's global standing in maritime trade. The UAE's maritime sector has been integral to its ambition of becoming a global leader in shipping, positioning it as a regional economic powerhouse. According to recent international shipping and cargo data, the UAE has solidified its role as a key player in global trade, with ports along the Persian Gulf coast driving its economic growth and revenue diversification. These strategic ports have helped the UAE become a crucial export hub, facilitating its rise in international trade. The country's ability to leverage its geographic location for regional and global trade underscores its growing importance in the world economy. Similarly, Singapore enjoys a comparable advantage, leveraging its strategic location to become a leading player in international maritime trade.



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, a historically pivotal maritime junction for cargo transiting across Eurasia, is poised to enhance its role as a key hub along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The Colombo Port City project was officially inaugurated on September 17, 2014, with significant involvement from Sri Lankan Government and foreign investors. This meticulously planned city, constructed on reclaimed land adjacent to Colombo's Central Business District, is designed to be a modern and sustainable gateway to South Asia. Port City Colombo, an International Service-Oriented Special Economic Zone, initially attracts an investment of USD 1.4 billion, with a projected total investment of USD 20 billion upon completion. Spanning 269 hectares, the development will offer 6.3 million square meters of built-up space and is expected to support a population of 273,000 by 2040, generating approximately 143,000 new jobs.

Colombo Port City represents a novel challenge for both Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Customs, necessitating a departure from traditional customs practices. To meet the strategic objectives of this ambitious project, Sri Lanka Customs must adopt high-scale automation and integrate advanced technologies as well as disruptive technologies such as Machine Learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This transformation requires a thorough re-engineering of existing processes and the implementation of modern practices observed in leading international customs authorities. Adopting these advanced methodologies will be crucial for Sri Lanka Customs to effectively support the government's goals for Colombo Port City.

Sri Lanka Customs is well-positioned to embrace new challenges and innovations. The global community is keenly observing how Sri Lanka Customs will play a pivotal role in transforming Colombo into a leading metropolis akin to Alexandria's historical prominence.



Port and City of Dubai



Colombo Port City, Sri Lanka



Colombo Port City, Sri Lanka



Hong Kong, China

Blockchain Based Cross-Validation Platform - “ValidAP”



By the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

Brief Introduction

ValidAP is an innovative project initiated by Hong Kong China after assuming the role of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific (A/P) Region (APVC). It is a blockchain based cross-validation platform designed specifically for real-time, easy and reliable verification of e-documents for the A/P region. ValidAP supports digital documents of any file types including .pdf, .doc and even image files like .jpg and .bmp. It is applicable to all sorts of documents such as licences, permits, certificates of origin, work reports, and any other certificates / documents of proof. The project aims to facilitate fast e-validation of trade documents across borders and promote collaboration and trade integration in the A/P Region. This user-friendly online platform can address the key pain points we are now facing with regards to paper document processing, and at the same time overcome the technical issues in information security and data exchange.

Pain Points of the Prevailing Situations

The traditional way to verify the authenticity of a paper trade document is always manual, time-consuming, labor-intensive and prone to human error. The process typically involves the checking of official seals and signatures, correctness of information of the issuing authority, anti-counterfeiting security features, and if in doubt sometimes even need lengthy communication with the authority. It makes the process even more complicated if an overseas issuing authority is involved. Despite all, paper trade documents still remain vulnerable to falsification and is difficult to be identified.

Currently in the private sector, the approach of electronic trade document validation usually requires the use of e-certificate signature supported by back-end system,

which in turn incurs high cost and causes more complexity of implementation. And still, data exchange among authorities and stakeholders may be necessary, which further promotes the difficulty of implementation across countries who may be governed by local privacy and personal data legislations. There may also have questions of trust on the ownership of data, security and protection, and disaster liabilities etc., in particular among government authorities and private sectors. These could be the reason why up to now we still do not have a prevalent e-validation platform for global cross-border trade and logistics chain.

Login page of ValidAP



Hong Kong, China

Project ValidAP with Simple-but-Secure System Design Architecture

If we can solve the above pain points, we are solving one of the biggest problems in global trade and logistics for decades.

ValidAP is a platform leveraging cryptography and blockchain technologies to support e-document verification, which DOES NOT require disclosure nor transmission of any content of the e-document.

When the issuing authority select an e-document to enable it to be verifiable on ValidAP, a “hash” value will be generated locally on the browser. “Hash” is a long string of symbols resulting from calculation through cryptography and cannot be reversed back to the original file document. In simple term, it is the seal number of the e-document where any tiny change of the file for even one bit will result in a totally different

“hash” value. To put onto the ValidAP blockchain, only the “hash” value and the descriptions of the e-document will be provided, and it is worth noting that neither the document nor any of its content would be uploaded to ValidAP nor even transmitted over the internet.

The ValidAP also consists of a public facing portal for document verification. For any person who has received the e-document, he/she just need to simply drag and drop it into the scanning area and ValidAP will calculate its “hash” locally on the browser under the same cryptography. By matching the “hash” value stored on the blockchain, ValidAP can then verify the authenticity of the e-document and provide an immediate feedback clearly indicating if the document is untampered and issued by the genuine authority.

ASIA/PACIFIC Regional Customs

Customs and Excise Department User

Browse File for Hash Generation: 選擇檔案 Cert of Origin (Sample).pdf

File Hash: 863d9d946cfd3b5aff6932b9977118e9b9c8738c9f13a4d2ee745cc2a892e38a

Name of Organization (User's organization):
Hong Kong Customs

Document Number:
ABCD1234

Type of Document:
Cert of Origin

Name of Company / Person:
ABC Company

Effective Date:
18/10/2024

Valid Until:
dd/月/yyyy

Put on Chain

Reset

The hash value is generated locally in the web browser

ASIA/PACIFIC Regional Customs

Customs and Excise Department User

Hash Value Generated
863d9d946cfd3b5aff6932b9977118e9b9c8738c9f13a4d2ee745cc2a892e38a

Metadata
Document Number: ABCD1234
Name of Company: ABC Company
Effective Date: 2024-10-18
Valid Until:

Metadata and hash stored on blockchain

Process another document

Only the hash value and metadata will be submitted

ASIA/PACIFIC Regional Customs

Validation Result

[Validation Passed] Cert of Origin (Sample).pdf
Document: ABCD1234
Number: ABCD1234
Name of Company: ABC Company
Effective Date: 2024-10-18
Valid Until:

[Validation Not Passed] Testing Doc 4.docx

Scan another document

The result of validation at the public portal



Hong Kong, China



Head of Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region, Assistant Commissioner (WCO) of Customs and Excise, Mr. Kin-Kei Li

Customs daily work because of the implied tariff exemption which often involves trade benefit in large amount. ValidAP then is able to provide a low cost solution while at the same time protect the logistic integrity.

By opening a user account, any A/P Member can already start applying the ValidAP service. ValidAP also supports Application Programming Interface (API) connection so that the “hashes” of the certificates produced by your own IT system can be put onto the blockchain automatically. ValidAP also comprises a dashboard displaying all the necessary statistics for A/P Members to measure their achievement and performance. Benefiting from the extendibility of blockchain nodes and cloud technology, ValidAP is technically possible to connect to more nodes hosted by other Members.

Mr. Kin-Kei Li, Head of the Secretariat Office of APVC, has first introduced the Project ValidAP in the 34th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points (RCP) Meeting held in Hong Kong China from 21st to 25th October 2024. With its rich IT experience, Hong Kong Customs agrees to bear the system development and implementation cost for all A/P Members to join free-of-charge, aiming to assure its role as the APVC to foster regional trade facilitation and integration, and to advance the Smart Customs and Green Customs initiatives for the A/P region. An online meeting focusing on the technical aspects of ValidAP will soon be arranged to help A/P members understand the system technicalities. After, the Secretariat Office of APVC is eager to launch a pilot trial for interested administrations to participate. The door is always open and you are welcome to drop a message to the APVC’s email "wco_apvc@customs.gov.hk" if you have any enquiry on Project ValidAP.

Benefits of ValidAP

Project ValidAP is an authority-led and trusted application with an aim to providing A/P members and global stakeholders a cost effective solution on e-documents validation service. It comprises a user account hierarchy and approval workflow so that supervision and integrity are upheld during the process of putting document hashes onto the blockchain. More importantly, ValidAP does not store any content of the involved e-documents so the risk of data breaches and the need for complicated legal negotiation become minimal.

With its public facing portal, ValidAP enables all stakeholders across the globe to validate e-documents issued by A/P authorities. For instance, an A/P Customs certificate can be easily verified by another Customs administration in Europe, who has received that e-document, by just a simple drag-and-drop action on ValidAP. Not only that but also the stakeholders in the private sector such as banks and insurance companies who have received the same certificate from the importer/exporter as a proof for issuing letter of credit or freight insurance can also enjoy ValidAP’s instant and reliable validation service. In particular, verification of documents for Free Trade Agreement eligibility (e.g. Certificate of Origin) plays a critical role in



Project ValidAP was first introduced in the 34th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points Meeting held in Hong Kong China in October 2024



Capacity Enhancement



Cambodia

Cambodia Customs National School designated by WCO as host of 11th Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center



Inauguration of the 11th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center

On 23 September 2024, Cambodia celebrated the official inauguration ceremony of the 11th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center at the Customs National School, Phnom Penh, under the auspices of **H.E Dr. AUN PORNMONIROTH**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance. The event was attended by over 400 participants, including ambassadors, heads and representatives of international organizations and missions to Cambodia, development partners, the World Customs Organization, Customs Administrations across the Asia Pacific region, and representatives of Cambodia line ministries and the private sector. The inauguration ceremony took place alongside the first RTC Cambodia's capacity building activity, the Joint Australian Border Force/WCO Regional Seminar on Supply Chain Integrity, which runs from 23-26 September 2024.

In his welcoming remark, **H.E Dr. AUN PORNMONIROTH** highlighted that the establishment of the 11th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center hosted by the Customs National School marks a historic achievement for the Cambodian Customs Administration and the Kingdom of Cambodia. He further added that the WCO RTC Cambodia will significantly contribute to the development agenda of the Royal Government of Cambodia, as outlined in the

Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I, a comprehensive socio-economic development plan spearheaded by the Royal Government under the visionary leadership of **Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN MANET**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, **H.E Dr. Kun Nhem**, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister, Director General of General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia, informed that the Memorandum of Understanding between the WCO and GDCE on the Establishment of WCO RTC in Cambodia was signed during the 143rd /144th Sessions of the WCO Council, at WCO headquarter. The WCO will use the facilities of RTC for the purposes of regional trainings, technical assistance meetings and Customs-related events. This status will strengthen Cambodia Customs administration's collaboration across the Asia-Pacific region to enhance capacity of customs officers and stakeholders.

Mr. Ricardo Treviño, Deputy Secretary General, offered his heartfelt congratulations via a video message from WCO headquarter in Brussels on the successful designation of the Customs National School as host of the WCO Regional Training Center. The WCO looks forward to continuing and strengthening the cooperative relationship with Cambodia. "Together we can achieve even greater height in capacity building and customs development", he added.



Cambodia

Journey to become a WCO Regional Training Center

The journey to establish the Customs National School (CNS) as a WCO Regional Training Center began with the Strategy for Customs Reform and Modernization 2019-2023, which mandated the building of the school to strengthen the human capital of the General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE). The CNS was built in October 2019 and completed in October 2021. It was officially inaugurated on December 23, 2021, by Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The 12-storey school, built on a 10,026-square-meter site, includes a conference hall, meeting rooms, a laboratory, classrooms, a library, accommodation, a prayer room, a sports center, a football pitch, a canteen, and ample parking with cutting-edge equipment. The CNS has four offices with a total of 17 staff members and dedicated sections for both national and international trainings and workshops. The Customs National School has become a key institution for capacity building among customs officials and stakeholders. Since its opening, it has hosted 52 local workshops and trainings, and 27 international ones in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and development partners.

GDCE has continuously played an important and strategic role in supporting the regional capacity activities undertaken by the WCO Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P). In addition, GDCE has been working successfully with the WCO, ROCB A/P, ASEAN, and development partners such as the IMF, JICA, World Bank, UNODC, UNCTAD, INTERPOL, ARISE Plus, and others in organizing national and international workshops and trainings at the Customs National School for Cambodia Customs officials, Customs officials from the Asia-Pacific region, private sectors, and relevant stakeholders. In addition, Cambodia Customs is actively promoting the use of WCO E-learning CLiK!, launched in Cambodia Customs in 2015. The number of registered users reach 650 (out of a total 1,300 officers). More than 500 certificates have been issued, and the program will be made compulsory in domestic training programs. With

this program, the pool of Cambodia Customs experts has been growing. Five Cambodia Customs experts have been accredited as WCO Accredited Experts in areas such as MPA-WTO TFA, RKC, HS, Origin, Risk Management, and IPR. While three others have been recognized as WCO experts in the area of CCP. Therefore, with its full potential and modern facilities, GDCE submitted a proposal requesting the recognition of the CNS as a WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Training Center to support capacity development activities of WCO Asia-Pacific member countries.

The application process for the Customs National School to become a WCO Regional Training Center for Asia-Pacific consisted of four phases:

1. In September 2023, GDCE submitted a proposal to the WCO Vice Chair of Asia-Pacific via the Asia-Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building.
2. The GDCE team made a presentation on the proposal to seek support from members during the 33rd Regional Contact Point Meeting in Melbourne.
3. The team presented the proposal to seek support during the 25th WCO Regional Head of Customs Administration Conference in Sydney.
4. GDCE and the WCO signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a WCO Regional Training Center with the WCO Secretary General on June 29, 2024, during the 143rd/144th Sessions of the WCO Council, at WCO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

The WCO will use the facilities of the RTC for regional trainings, technical assistance meetings, and Customs-related events. This status will strengthen the Cambodia Customs Administration's collaboration with neighboring Customs administrations, especially Customs administrations in the Asia-Pacific region, to enhance the capacity of customs officers and stakeholders in the region.

To realize these missions and vision, the Customs National School (CNS) has developed the following action plan to ensure the effective operation of the WCO Regional Training Center.



Cambodia



H. E. Dr. AUN PORNMONIROTH, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance delivered the Opening Remarks

Building a Strong WCO RTC Cambodia

RTC Cambodia aims to become a regional hub for customs expertise and excellence, contributing to trade facilitation, secure global supply chains, sustainable economic development, and social protection. Its missions are to develop and conduct training modules recommended by the WCO and WCO/AP ROCB, to organize regular trainings, seminars, and workshops for national, sub-regional, and Asia-Pacific region participants, to provide modern facilities and equipment for trainings, and to allocate sufficient staff, experts, trainers, and adequate budgets to support the functioning of the RTC.

As the 11th WCO RTC, the Customs National School (CNS) has developed the following action plans to

ensure the effective operation of the WCO Regional Training Center. Key action plans are centered around six key objectives:

1. Develop and conduct WCO regional training courses at least three times per year.
2. Develop and manage a pool of expertise trainers at a national and international level.
3. Equip and maintain training facilities, equipment, and technology that meet international standards.
4. Develop and support the WCO's blended training program.
5. Prepare activity worksheets for training courses, seminars, and workshops by allocating appropriate staff, experts, and trainers.
6. Prepare and secure adequate budget and resources for the organization of training courses at least three times per year.

The establishment of the WCO Regional Training Center at the Customs National School marks a significant milestone in Cambodia's customs development. This milestone is a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of the Royal Government of Cambodia to strengthening Cambodia's customs administration and fostering regional cooperation in the areas of capacity building, trade facilitation, and global supply chain security. Moreover, WCO RTC Cambodia is committed to equipping customs officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance customs operations, leading to improvements in trade facilitation, revenue collection, and economic development.



The Signing of the Honorary Guest Book



Cambodia



Mr. Chan Sopheap, Deputy Director General of General Department of Customs and Excise, delivered the opening remark for the first Joint Australian Border Force/WCO Regional Seminar on Supply Chain Integrity, which runs from 23-26 September 2024



Report on progress of Customs National School by H.E Dr. KUN NHEM, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister, Director General of the General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia (GDCE)



H. E. Dr. AUN PORNMONIROTH, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance, is pressing the button to Officially Inaugurate the WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Centre.



Congratulatory Video Remarks by Mr. Ricardo Treviño, Deputy Secretary General of WCO





Cambodia





Japan

Connect More - New Era of Capacity Building -



Signing of Record of Discussion between Japan Customs and Lao Customs for Mekong Region Connectivity Project at Vientiane, February 2024



Meeting between Japan Customs and Thai Customs for Mekong Region Connectivity Project at Bangkok, January 2024

Japan Customs has been collaborating with traditional and new partners to bring the synergistic effects of Capacity Building and connect them more in many projects, such as the new project to strengthen the connectivity of the Mekong Region and the recent collaboration with other Customs for supporting Pacific Islands, both collaborating with JICA.

“What is the most suitable approach for capacity building?”

This is what Japan Customs always considers first during the development and implementation of programmes for capacity building (CB). Japan Customs has provided a variety of CB programmes for many years, based on the needs or purposes of beneficiaries, which have contributed to enhancing the capability of Customs in many countries. To maximize the outcomes, there are various approaches from bilateral cooperation, utilizing the WCO Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF) Japan and collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), to cooperation with other development partners.

Japan Customs dispatched the first JICA long-term expert to the Philippines in 1990 and currently seven long-term experts are in six countries. The most unique characteristic of them is that they are based in the beneficiary's Customs for smooth communication between the beneficiary's Customs and Japan Customs, and to help comprehend the actual practices and challenges of each Customs. Thanks to the detailed reports from long-term experts, Japan Customs can provide necessary CB and follow-up even after the programme ends.

For the Mekong Region

To connect the Mekong region, JICA has been supporting for the development and enhancement of the economic corridors. Although the infrastructure has sufficiently developed, the capacity of customs officers is vital for realizing trade facilitation. Therefore, JICA long-term experts have been playing a significant role. In 2024, Japan Customs started a new project for the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the Kingdom of Thailand, collaborating with JICA. This project provides a new concept of “connectivity,” which focuses on the region instead of one country, for further trade facilitation. The synergistic effect from the past projects and further impacts are highly expected in this project. For example, the project for “Enhancing the Human Resource Development Capacity of Customs Administration” for Thai Customs covered how to manage the CB programme in an efficient manner and was successfully completed in June 2024. Japan Customs believes the next project in the Mekong region to strengthen the capacity of human resource development will be conducted synergistically in cooperation with the Thai Customs Academy.



Japan

For Pacific Islands Countries (PICs)

The Government of Japan has a long-standing cooperative relationship with the PICs through various channels of dialogue, including the Summit-level meeting named the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM). Customs is one of the leading connections. Japan Customs has cooperated with the Customs administrations of PICs for almost half a century.

More recently, Japan Customs has placed greater emphasis on revenue collection and trade facilitation, recognizing that Customs are particularly important in this region as the primary revenue collectors. One example of such cooperation is the Master Trainer Programme (MTP), a joint WCO/JICA programme that aims to build more sustainable training capacity on key Customs topics through the development of the pool of well-experienced trainers, tailor-made training materials, and a training programme/course syllabus. For PICs Customs, the MTP has been implemented in the areas of HS and Customs valuation (Phase 1) and PCA and risk management (Phase 2).

Meanwhile, development partners involved in CB for PICs Customs has increased. This requires PICs Customs to coordinate with each partner, resulting in a heavy administrative burden for them. To address this



Participants of meetings between Japan Customs and Cambodia Customs for Mekong Region Connectivity Project at Phnom Penh, January 2024

situation, Japan Customs has begun to strengthen coordination with other Customs administrations, such as Australia and New Zealand and the Oceania Customs Organisation. Through the enhanced communications among the development partners, it is expected that the CB programmes to be better coordinated and made more efficient for PICs Customs.

Connecting partners

Connecting with beneficiaries, JICA, WCO, and other donors, Japan Customs will contribute to providing CB in line with the new era to fulfil Customs' missions and meet the expectations from the public.



Participants at the 5th MTP Workshop at Nadi, Fiji, February 2024



Participants listen to feedback from a lecturer at the 5th MTP Workshop at Nadi, Fiji, February 2024



Macao

Enhancing Customs Capacity-building on Intellectual Property Rights

Training program jointly-organized by Hong Kong and Macao Customs – Online anti-counterfeiting techniques conducted by Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department



Joint Training Program Between Hong Kong and Macao Customs on Enhancing Capacity-Building for Intellectual Property Rights

In order to enhance the investigation skills and evidence collection capabilities of customs officers in combating online infringement and reach higher law enforcement standards, Macao Customs Service invited Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department to conduct a "Practical Training on Online Investigation and Electronic Forensics" held in Macao on 23rd July 2024.

During the training, officers of Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department first introduced local law enforcement strategies, and gave professional explanations on the fundamental situation of online infringement, types of infringement, investigation techniques and evidence collection capabilities. Thus, customs officers deepened their knowledge and understanding of the training content through real cases.

The lecturer interacted with customs officers during the training, teaching customs officers to track suspects through online platforms, in-depth



Interactive Training Session on Online Investigation Techniques

use of big data for website analysis, and application of online investigation tools. In coordination with the "Anti-Counterfeiting Mega Data System" of Macao Customs Service, such integrated technology helps cracking down on increasingly hidden online infringements, enhancing regional enforcement capabilities, and actively fulfilling the customs' duty of protecting intellectual property rights.

This training program not only enhances the enforcement capabilities of Macao Customs Service, but also reflects the joint efforts among customs members in the Asia-Pacific region in intellectual property protection. With the advent of the digital age, network security and intellectual property protection have become global challenges. The close cooperation and joint capacity building among members of the Asia-Pacific region are of great significance in safeguarding the security of the Asia-Pacific region.



Customs Appreciation

Customs Appreciation

In this edition of the Customs News, we are excited to introduce a special Customs Appreciation segment dedicated to recognizing the exceptional contributions of outstanding Customs officers from various administrations. This chapter highlights the remarkable achievements of four distinguished officers, each nominated by their respective administrations for their exemplary service and commitment to enhancing customs operations. Through their dedication, leadership, and innovative approaches, these officers have made significant impacts in their fields, and we are proud to celebrate their accomplishments. Join us as we honor their hard work and dedication to the mission of customs enforcement and trade facilitation.

Fiji

Officer's Name and Title:

Mohammed Riyaz Shameem - Chief Customs Officer

Mr. Mohammed Riyaz Shameem has recently been appointed as the Chief Customs Officer at the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS). With an impressive 33 years of dedicated service to the organization, he has progressed from the role of Assistant Customs Officer to his current leadership position.

Key Achievements

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Program: Mr. Shameem has played a pivotal role in establishing the AEO Program within the Fiji Customs Administration. This program, which was successfully implemented in 2018, aims to enhance the security and efficiency of the supply chain.

Program Review: Currently, he is actively involved in the review of the AEO Program, collaborating closely with the Australian Border Force to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance in the evolving customs landscape.

Leadership and Stakeholder Engagement: Mr. Shameem's exemplary leadership has significantly strengthened relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. His efforts have greatly enhanced FRCS's engagement initiatives, fostering a collaborative environment that benefits all parties involved.

Mr. Shameem's extensive experience and commitment to improving customs operations in Fiji underscore his vital role in advancing the objectives of the FRCS.



India

Officer's Name and Title:

Shri Sreesh T.K. – Superintendent of Customs



The achievements of the officer in focus are a testament to his exceptional skills and dedication in the field of customs enforcement. His remarkable capabilities in detecting customs violations, particularly in cases of outright smuggling and commercial fraud, have made a significant impact on national security and revenue protection. Below is a detailed overview of his notable accomplishments:

Key Achievements

Detection of Smuggling Operations: The officer has successfully identified and disrupted numerous smuggling operations, showcasing his keen investigative skills and attention to detail.

Seizures of Contraband:

- **Gold:** He played a pivotal role in the seizure of over 256 kg of smuggled gold, valued at an impressive ₹103.50 crores. This significant recovery not only prevented illicit trade but also safeguarded national economic interests.
- **Heroin:** His efforts led to the confiscation of 7.33 kg of heroin, worth approximately ₹47.62 crores. This seizure is crucial in the fight against drug trafficking and its associated societal impacts.
- **Dried Betel Nuts:** The officer was instrumental in seizing 19 metric tons of dried betel nuts, valued at ₹1.22 crores, further demonstrating his effectiveness in tackling various forms of smuggling.

Revenue Recovery from Commercial Fraud: Through diligent investigations, he successfully recovered ₹14.3 crores in revenue lost to commercial fraud cases. This recovery underscores his commitment to upholding the law and ensuring fair trade practices.

Cultivation of Informer Networks: The officer has excelled in building and maintaining a wide network of informers, which has proven invaluable in gathering intelligence and preempting smuggling activities.

Prohibition Enforcement: His vigilance has led to the detection of multiple attempts to export prohibited goods at seaports, further enhancing the integrity of customs operations.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to customs enforcement, the officer was honored with the President's Medal in 2022. This prestigious award reflects his unwavering commitment to combating smuggling syndicates and protecting the nation's borders.

The officer's exemplary achievements not only highlight his individual capabilities but also serve as an inspiration for others in the field of customs enforcement. His relentless pursuit of justice and dedication to safeguarding the nation's economic interests are commendable and deserving of appreciation.

New Zealand

Officer's Name and Title:

Anthea Grant – Customs Technical Specialist, Border Protect

Ms. Grant serves as a Customs Technical Specialist within the Border Protect division of the New Zealand Customs Service. Her role is pivotal in enhancing the capabilities of supply chain businesses by educating them on how to identify suspicious activities. This initiative aims to increase seizures and effectively detect and deter criminal infiltration within the supply chain.



Key Achievements

Educational Engagement: Ms. Grant is actively involved in engaging with supply chain businesses, providing them with the knowledge and tools necessary to recognize and report suspicious activities. This proactive approach is crucial in strengthening the integrity of the supply chain.

Development of Educational Resources: She plays a significant role in designing industry-facing educational materials that are tailored to meet the needs of various stakeholders in the supply chain.

Award-Winning E-Learning Module: Recently, Ms. Grant led the development of an innovative e-learning module that has received accolades for its effectiveness. This module is specifically designed to assist frontline Customs officers in identifying criminal infiltration during their daily interactions with industry partners.

Collaboration with Australian Border Force: The success of the e-learning module has led to its adoption by the Australian Border Force, where it has been integrated into their suite of educational resources. This collaboration underscores the importance of sharing knowledge and best practices across borders to combat customs-related crimes effectively.

Ms. Grant's dedication to enhancing customs operations and her commitment to education and collaboration make her a valuable asset to the New Zealand Customs Service and the broader customs community.

Officer's Name and Title:

A.W. Sudattha Indrajith Silva - Additional Director General of Customs

Mr. Silva has devoted an impressive 36 years to the Sri Lanka Customs, establishing himself as a leading expert in several critical areas, including Customs Law, Valuation, Classification, Risk Management, Automation, and Trade Facilitation. His extensive experience and specialized knowledge have significantly contributed to the enhancement of customs operations in Sri Lanka.



Key Achievements

Customs Training Centre: Since 2000, Mr. Silva has served as a resource person at the Customs Training Centre, where he has trained a substantial number of Customs Officers and industry professionals. His commitment to education has helped elevate the standards of customs practices in the country.

Academic Engagement: In addition to his training role, Mr. Silva has lectured at several prestigious universities in Sri Lanka, sharing his expertise with the next generation of customs professionals and fostering a deeper understanding of customs regulations and practices.

International Representation: Mr. Silva has represented Sri Lanka at key international forums, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the World Customs Organization. His participation in these forums underscores his role as a vital contributor to global discussions on customs and trade facilitation.

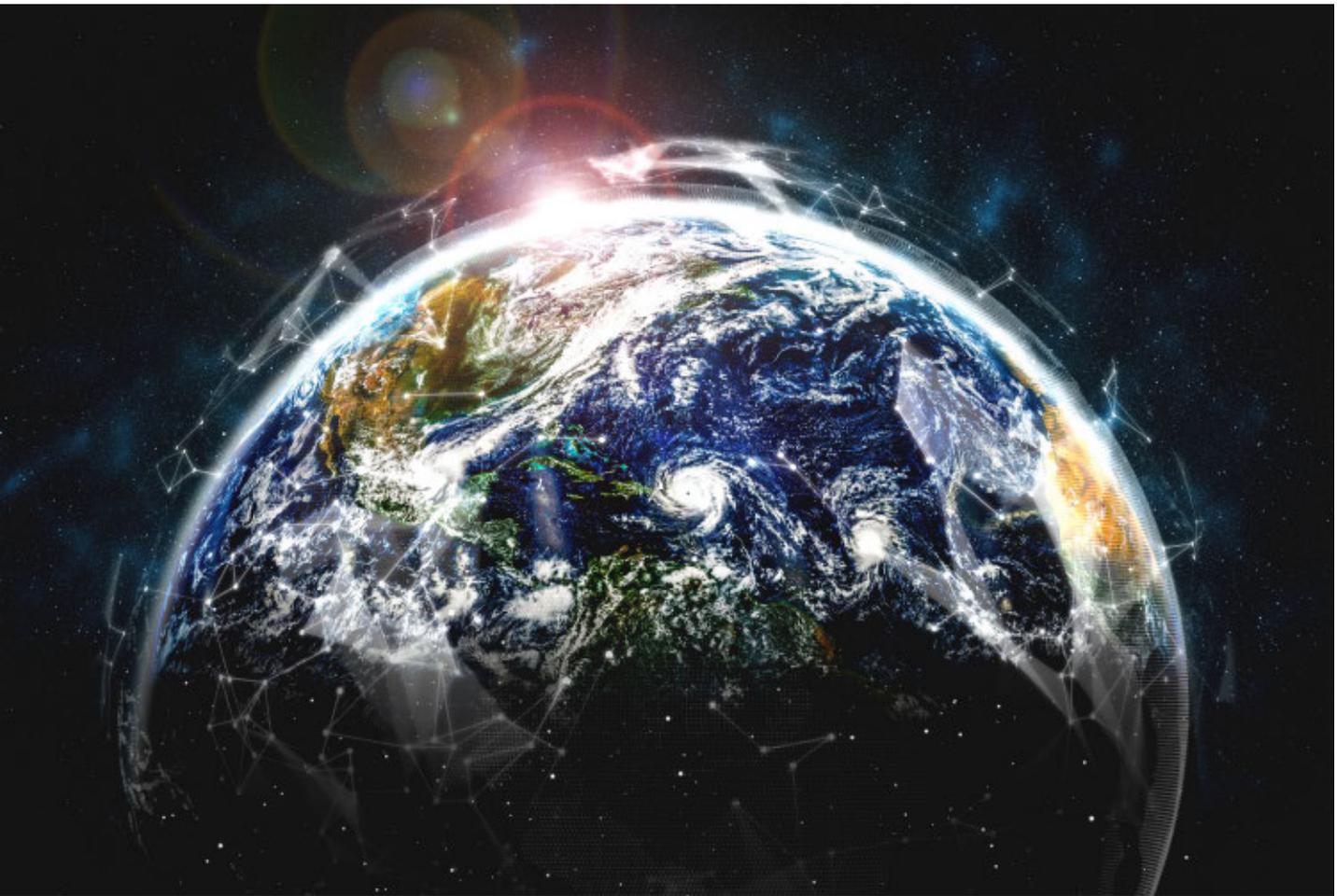
Media Spokesperson: Serving as the official media spokesperson for Sri Lanka Customs from 2021 to 2023, Mr. Silva played a crucial role in public communications. His efforts in this capacity have enhanced the transparency and public understanding of customs operations and initiatives.

Mr. Silva's unwavering dedication and multifaceted contributions to Sri Lanka Customs exemplify his commitment to improving customs practices and fostering international cooperation in trade facilitation.

RECENT AND UPCOMING WCO EVENTS



October 2024	34th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points Meeting	Hong Kong, China 21 - 25 October 2024
November 2024	2024 WCO Technology Conference & Exhibition	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 12 - 14 November 2024
	35th Administrative Meeting of National Contact Points for RILO for Asia and the Pacific	Hong Kong, China 18 - 19 November 2024
	44th Meeting of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee	Brussels, Belgium 19 - 20 November 2024
	2nd Meeting of the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism Project Team	Brussels, Belgium 25 - 26 November 2024
	Working Group on Revenue Compliance and Fraud	Brussels, Belgium 27 - 28 November 2024
December 2024	91st Session WCO Policy Commission	Cape Town, South Africa 3 - 5 December 2024
	Administrative Committee on Istanbul Convention	9 - 10 December 2024
January 2025	2nd Symposium on "Removing counterfeits from e-commerce"	Brussels, Belgium 15 January 2025
February 2025	Global Forum on Origin Interconnectivity 2025	Brussels, Belgium 3 - 4 February 2025
	Technical Committee on Rules of Origin	Brussels, Belgium 5 - 7 February 2025
April 2025	Conference on Simplification of Procedures and Best Practices for E-commerce	Hong Kong, China 15 - 17 April 2025



ASIA/PACIFIC ^{Volume} **#73**
CUSTOMS NEWS

**Engaging Traditional and
New Partners with Purpose**