



ASIA/PACIFIC VOLUME #77 CUSTOMS NEWS



SMART CUSTOMS: ADVANCING INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION



ASIA/PACIFIC
Regional Customs

Smart Customs: Advancing Innovation and Collaboration

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A Brief Note

from the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

Tsz-tat CHAN

WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region
Commissioner of Hong Kong Customs



Dear Esteemed Members of the WCO Asia/Pacific Region,

I am delighted to present the 77th issue of the WCO Asia/Pacific Customs News themed “Smart Customs: Advancing Innovation and Collaboration”. This issue showcases our shared vision of strengthening solidarity and innovation within our Customs community.

The concept of Smart Customs is essential to the future of our profession. It signifies not only the adoption of advanced technologies but also the transformation of institutional practices to meet the demands of modern trade. By integrating digital and innovative solutions, enhancing risk management and fostering collaboration with stakeholders, Customs administrations are positioning themselves as trusted partners in global supply chains, ensuring that facilitation and enforcement are balanced, transparent and resilient.

The articles in this volume examine various aspects of Smart Customs, including digital clearance platforms, intelligence led enforcement, collaborative border

management and capacity building. The content shows how Customs administrations across our region are embracing innovation to enhance efficiency, protect revenue and safeguard society. These initiatives demonstrate our steadfast determination to advance the Smart Customs agenda.

We also take pride in recognising the contribution of the officers featured in the “Customs Appreciation” corner. Their dedication, professionalism and innovation exemplify Customs excellence. Their achievements remind us that institutional progress is driven not only by systems and structures, but also by the commitment of individuals who uphold our collective mission.

The Asia/Pacific region will continue to build upon this strong foundation. By sharing expertise, expanding partnerships and implementing Smart Customs, we are dedicated to creating a modern, flexible and cooperative Customs community that promotes legitimate trade and defends our communities.

A Brief Note

from the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the 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



Dear WCO Asia/Pacific Colleagues,

The 77th issue of the Asia/Pacific Customs News under the theme of “Smart Customs: Advancing Innovation and Collaboration” provides a summary of diverse digital strategies, application of disruptive technologies and collaborative frameworks in our region.

The success of the Regional Conference on Smart Customs held in Hong Kong in March 2026 marks a milestone for our region. It is a privilege for the Secretariat Office to host this important event, which functioned as a dynamic platform for Member administrations to exchange views and experience, share use cases, and explore the transformative potential of emerging technologies. The high-level discussions in Hong Kong reaffirmed our collective determination to advance innovation and collaboration on the path to Customs modernization.

We are pleased to feature in this issue contributions from Hong Kong, China, India and Thailand, which illustrate how the integration of artificial intelligence, digital risk assessment and innovative trade zone frameworks can enhance the efficiency of Customs operations. Updates from Australia and Cambodia highlight the vital role of regional synergy in fulfilling international trade obligations and strengthening enforcement through multi-agency partnerships. All these practical, technology-driven solutions are crucial to the implementation of the “Smart Customs” agenda in our region. In addition, officers are commended in the “Customs Appreciation” corner for their significant achievements that reflect their commitment, expertise and ingenuity in driving our institutions forward.

We remain dedicated to supporting Members in promoting Smart Customs modernization and hope the insights shared in this issue serve as a testament to the contributions of the Asia/Pacific region to global trade.



SPOTLIGHT

Asia/Pacific Customs News #77



Smart Customs: Enhancing Public Service with AI

With rising public expectations for public services and in alignment with the HKSAR Government’s “AI+ Civil Services” strategy, Hong Kong Customs has recently developed two targeted AI solutions to deliver faster and higher-quality replies to public enquiries. Together, the solutions reduce manual processing steps, simplify workflows, optimise resource allocation, and significantly improve service efficiency.

Customs AI Ambassador XiaoHui: Answering Public Enquiries by AI Technology

Hong Kong Customs introduced its first generation of virtual Customs ambassador XiaoHui in 2023 to manage general public enquiries. XiaoHui has since assisted travellers and the public in resolving a wide range of Customs enquiries, spanning from passenger and cargo clearance to trade facilitation, intellectual property protection, consumer protection, anti-money laundering, etc. XiaoHui operated across the Customs Homepage, social media platforms alongside physical locations at all Hong Kong control points in the form of interactive displays. In 2026, keeping pace with the rapid evolution of generative AI technology, XiaoHui reached a significant milestone following a major system enhancement. The enhanced Customs AI Ambassador XiaoHui is now powered by a self-developed Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) knowledge base and deeply integrated with a localized large language model (LLM).

This enhancement substantially improves XiaoHui's semantic understanding and information retrieval capabilities, enabling it to address a broader range of enquiries with greater precision and nuance. To enhance the user experience, XiaoHui now features a digital human interface, fostering a warmer and more approachable interaction that reflects human-like engagement. These improvements also yield tangible operational benefits. Operating around the clock, XiaoHui processes substantial volumes of routine enquiries, alleviating workload pressures on frontline officers and reducing public waiting times. The system enables frontline personnel to focus greater attention on complex matters requiring human judgement and professional expertise.

QuickSolve: Transforming Written Enquiry Handling with AI Precision

Building on XiaoHui’s success, Hong Kong Customs launched QuickSolve, an advanced internal AI tool that revolutionizes how staff handle written public enquiries. The department receives a high daily volume of these enquiries, ranging from detailed import/export queries by companies to travellers’ questions about prohibited items. In the traditional process, officers invested significant time in manually reviewing past correspondence, consulting reference materials, and verifying legal details for accurate, compliant replies.

QuickSolve addresses these challenges by

leveraging AI to integrate LLMs that comprehend enquiry content, while RAG grounds all outputs in comprehensive, department-curated knowledge bases — tailored and structured according to specialised domains of Customs expertise. It automatically generates well-structured draft replies with precise citations and references, speeding up the reply in a blink for review and refinement. The officers are only required to review the draft, make any necessary adjustments and issue the final response. This streamlined process significantly enhances efficiency, accuracy and consistency, substantially reduces processing times and thus optimises resource allocation.

AI Pillars Driving Smart Customs Transformation

The Customs AI Ambassador and QuickSolve form complementary pillars of Hong Kong Customs AI strategy: one provides warm, immediate public engagement, while the other enables precise and efficient internal workflows. Together, they showcased the dedication and effort made by Hong Kong Customs

to a more agile, responsive, and citizen-centric Customs service, aligning with the HKSAR Government’s promotion of “AI + Civil Services” campaign. Looking ahead, Hong Kong Customs will continue exploring AI advancements to further the Smart Customs initiative and enhance service to the community.





‘Turant Customs’: Smart Customs Innovation with a Collaborative Approach

Introduction: The Dawn of a New Era

International Trade is ever-changing due to rising volumes and heightened national security concerns. In this context, trade facilitation is of paramount importance for faster movement of goods without escalating costs and bottlenecks. Thus, Indian Customs

has initiated "Turant Customs¹," [Turant in Hindi means Immediate] through which "Faceless, Contactless, and Paperless" Customs clearance has been implemented, which is a paradigm shift in policy and a testament to India's collaborative and technology-centric approach.

Technological Evolution: The Backbone of Indian Customs

Faceless and Contactless Assessment allows an assessing officer in one jurisdiction to assess a Bill of Entry (randomly assigned by the Customs Automated system²) of a different Customs station. This seeks to minimise physical interaction between stakeholders and Customs, leading to transparency, uniformity and anonymity.

Paperless Customs aims to digitise Customs processes via ICEGATE to eliminate the use of physical documents. Importers can now self-register the goods online³, enabling Customs Compliance Verification

and machine-based Out-of-Charge before duty payment⁴. e-Sanchit serves as an online repository for document sharing with Customs, while the ICETRAK app tracks BE/SB status.

This is complemented by an AI-ML-driven Risk Management System (RMS), which identifies low-risk cargo for facilitation while targeting high-risk threats. This ensures that the legitimate trade moves seamlessly while national security and revenue collection remain uncompromised.

The Epitome of Collaboration: Harmonising Stakeholders

National Assessment Centres (NACs) are nodal bodies that unify different stakeholders and monitor standardised faceless assessment. They interact with sector-wise industries for better resolution of their issues. Turant Suvidha Kendras (TSKs)⁵ handle the processing of necessary physical documents.

Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade (SWIFT) digitally integrates several Partner

Government Agencies with the Customs interface, eliminating the requirement for multiple clearances. The Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme has enabled Customs to identify compliant traders and provide them with expedited clearances and deferred payment facilities, fostering an environment of mutual trust and digital transparency. A formal Anonymised Escalation Mechanism (AEM) offers time-bound escalation of delayed assessments.

Advancing Innovation: Best Practices and Impacts

'Turant Customs' has resulted in the clearance of over 85% of compliant consignments without human intervention, which has essentially freed up the department to concentrate on riskier consignments.

Innovation has moved from initial roll-out to ongoing optimisation, combining digital efficiency, accountability, and robust integration into a paperless clearance environment.

Challenges and Opportunities: The Road Ahead

Faceless assessment confronts certain obstacles: the dwell time has not reduced as expected. The non-submission of necessary documents in e-Sanchit and piecemeal queries from assessing officers cause delays. Disruptive technologies are

being increasingly integrated to enhance facilitation. Nonetheless, there is potential for transformation. A unified Customs Integrated System (CIS) is being launched, which will enable faster clearance via algorithmic risk profiling.

Conclusion: A Global Model for Smart Customs

India's Turant Customs is in line with World Customs Organization (WCO) Smart Customs standards, which focus on emerging technologies as well as innovation in existing ones. Continuous learning from the best global

practices and a collaborative approach are keeping India in good standing in the emerging international trade ecosystem.

1. Circular No. 09/2019- Customs dated 28.02.2019, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

2. Notification No.50/2020-Customs dated 05.06.2020, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

3. Circular No. 40/2017-Customs dated 13.10.2017 and Instruction No. 02/2018 Customs dated 07.02.2018, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

4. Circular No. 09/2019- Customs dated 28.02.2019, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

5. Circular No.28/2020-Customs dated 05.06.2020, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Smart Customs: Advancing Innovation and Collaboration

By: Parashivamurthy M.K IRS, Additional Commissioner, CCO, Customs, Bengaluru

I. Introduction:

Let's have a bird's-eye view of how innovation and collaboration are reshaping Customs administrations worldwide, highlighting digital transformation, stakeholder partnerships, and emerging technologies that enhance efficiency, transparency, and trust in cross-border trade.



Customs administrations are transitioning into modern, intelligence-led organizations that utilize cutting-edge technology to balance border security with trade facilitation. By adopting tools such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and non-intrusive scanning, the agencies are moving toward paperless systems that increase transparency and speed. True progress depends on robust collaboration through international partnerships and private-sector engagement, such as trusted trader programs. While the shift faces obstacles like cybersecurity threats and digital skill gaps, the overarching goal is to create a more secure and seamless environment for international commerce. Ultimately, the concept of Smart Customs represents a strategic evolution in how countries manage the complexities of modern supply chains.

Smart Customs :

Advancing Innovation and Collaboration

In an era of rapid globalization, expanding e-commerce, and increasingly complex supply chains, Customs administrations are no longer confined to traditional border control functions. They are evolving into technology-driven, service-oriented, and intelligence-led organizations. The theme “Smart Customs: Advancing Innovation and Collaboration” reflects this transformation and aligns closely with the vision of the World Customs Organization (WCO) to create Customs that are efficient, transparent, and trusted partners in global trade.

II. Innovative Approaches and Technologies Driving Modern Customs Operations

Innovation has become the backbone of modern Customs administration. Several cutting-edge approaches are reshaping how Customs operates:

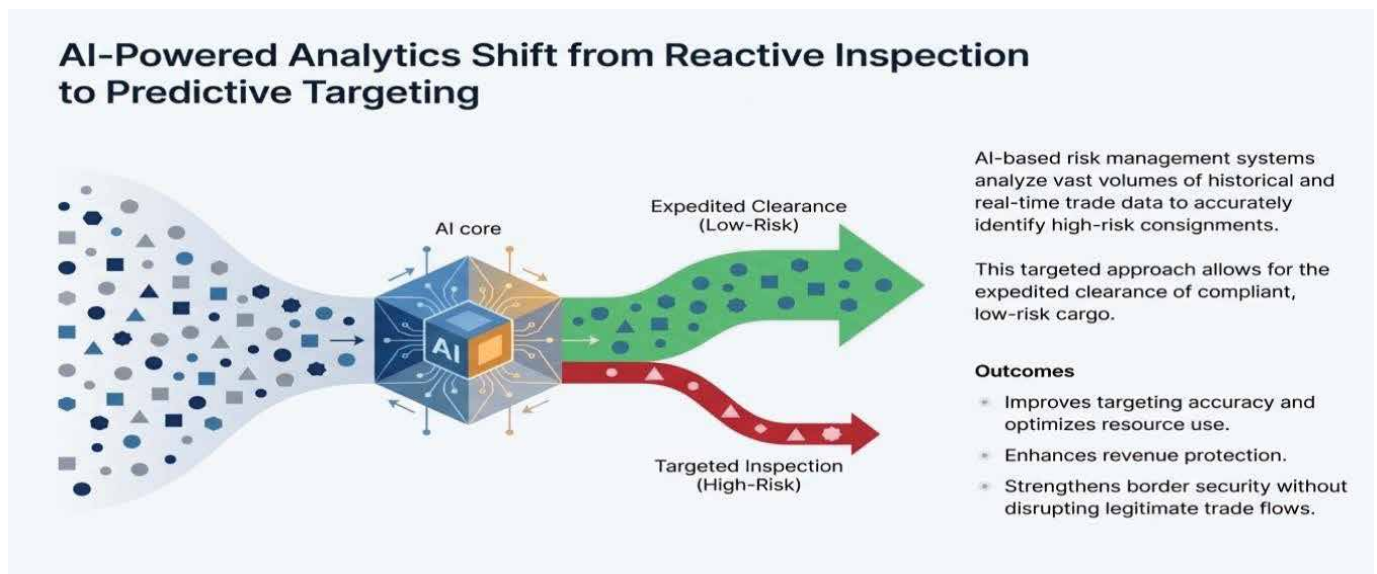
A. Digital and Paperless Customs

Electronic declarations, e-payments, and digital document submission have replaced paper-based systems, significantly reducing clearance time and human interface. Single Window platforms enable

traders to submit information once, which is then shared across regulatory agencies.

B. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Analytics

AI-based risk management systems analyse large volumes of trade data to identify high-risk consignments while facilitating low-risk trade. Predictive analytics improves targeting accuracy, enhances revenue protection, and strengthens border security.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming Customs operations by automating complex processes, improving accuracy, and strengthening risk management across global trade. AI-driven risk profiling applies machine learning to large datasets to identify patterns of non-compliance, fraud, smuggling, and undervaluation, enabling targeted and intelligence-led interventions.

AI integrates seizure data, geospatial analysis, and network analytics to predict risk hotspots and flag suspicious importers or brokers. Computer vision detects concealed anomalies in X-ray scans, while natural language processing (NLP) validates declarations against sanctions and regulatory controls. Historical trade data and anomaly detection models prioritize high-risk consignments for inspection while expediting low-risk cargo.

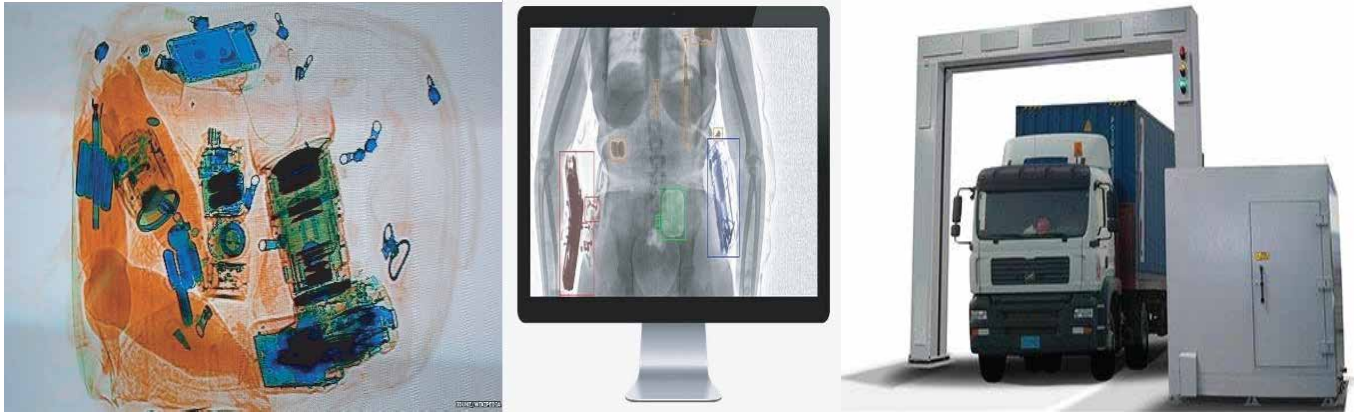
Key applications include AI-assisted HS code classification using text and image analysis, automated document processing and fraud detection through OCR and sanctions screening, predictive analytics for congestion and delay forecasting, and chatbots that support trader queries and electronic filing.

Globally, India's National Customs Targeting Centre under CBIC deploys AI/ML for dynamic risk profiling and X-ray analytics, while the EU's CRMF/CRMS2 system applies machine learning for real-time risk scoring. These initiatives are supported through collaboration under the umbrella of World Customs Organization, reinforcing Smart Customs through data-driven enforcement and trade facilitation.

C. Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Technologies

Advanced container scanners, handheld detection devices, and image-analysis tools allow faster and safer inspections without physical examination, improving both enforcement and trade facilitation.

Computer Vision in X-ray Imaging for Smart Customs



Computer Vision (CV) is a core enabler of X-ray image analysis for Customs container inspection at seaports, airports, ICDs, and border checkpoints. It enables fast, accurate, and scalable non-intrusive inspection, supporting both enforcement and trade facilitation.

CV systems detect concealed contraband, mis-declared cargo, and structural anomalies such as false walls and cavities. Using deep-learning models, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks, X-ray images are processed through noise reduction, density normalization, and feature extraction to generate risk scores or alerts. These outputs support officers' decisions while preserving human oversight.

D. Blockchain and Secure Data Exchange for Smart Customs

Blockchain technology enables secure, tamper-proof, and real-time exchange of trade data among Customs administrations and supply chain stakeholders. By providing a shared, immutable ledger, it enhances transparency, traceability, and compliance across cross-border trade.

Immutable record-keeping ensures that shipment data, declarations, certificates of origin, and invoices cannot be altered retroactively, preventing fraud such as false origin claims and duplicate invoicing. Each transaction is time-stamped and digitally signed, strengthening audit integrity. Real-time visibility allows importers, brokers, logistics providers, and Customs

Key benefits include faster clearance of low-risk cargo, improved detection accuracy, reduced operator fatigue, and a shift from random to risk-based inspections. Emerging capabilities — human-in-the-loop AI, 3D X-ray imaging, explainable AI, and integration with risk management systems — further strengthen effectiveness and legal defensibility.

CV-enabled X-ray analysis aligns closely with Smart Customs initiatives of the World Customs Organization, enhancing anti-smuggling enforcement, reducing dwell time, and improving transparency and accountability.

officers to access the same live data, reducing disputes and improving risk assessment.

For Customs administrations, blockchain reduces fraud through decentralized verification, improves efficiency via smart contract-based automation, and builds trust through complete audit trails. Global Smart Customs initiatives led by the World Customs Organization include blockchain implementations by Brazil's Receita Federal and AI-integrated Customs modernization in China. In India, blockchain pilots under SWIFT can strengthen tariff verification and document validation, supporting trade facilitation, enforcement, and transparency.

III. Collaborative Initiatives Between Customs Administrations and Trade Stakeholders

Smart Customs thrives on collaboration rather than control alone.



- Customs–Trade Partnerships**
 Programs such as Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) schemes promote voluntary compliance by offering trusted traders benefits like faster clearance and fewer inspections. This partnership approach strengthens supply chain security while reducing transaction costs.
- Inter-Agency Cooperation**
 Effective Customs operations require coordination with other border agencies such as food safety, plant

quarantine, drug control, and security agencies. Integrated border management ensures seamless decision-making and avoids duplication.

- International Cooperation**
 Information sharing, mutual recognition of standards, and joint operations between Customs administrations help combat smuggling, fraud, and illicit trade while ensuring smoother cross-border movement of goods.

IV. Best Practices for Leveraging Digital Tools to Enhance Efficiency and Transparency



India

To fully realize the benefits of innovation, Customs administrations must adopt key best practices.

- End-to-end digitization of processes reduces discretion and delays.
- Faceless and contactless assessments enhance transparency and curb corruption.
- Real-time dashboards and performance metrics enable continuous monitoring of clearance times, compliance levels, and officer workload.
- Structured stakeholder outreach and training ensure that traders and Customs officers effectively use new digital tools, building public trust.

Advanced trade security is strengthened through real-time data analytics and predictive modeling, while automation delivers cost reductions, as demonstrated

by China’s large-scale adoption of locally developed innovations. Cross-border harmonization through mutual recognition of controls supports “green channels” for low-risk trade.

Global collaboration plays a central role. The World Customs Organization’s Smart Customs Project promotes peer learning via its Community Portal launched in 2024, aligned with the WCO 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. Initiatives such as the “3S” framework—Smart Customs, Smart Borders, and Smart Connectivity—advance data sharing and Authorized Economic Operator mutual recognition. In India, the Single Window System and AI pilots under the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan position the country for regional leadership.

V. Challenges and Opportunities in Advancing Innovation within Customs Administrations

Navigating the Path Forward: Challenges and Opportunities

<h3 style="color: #c08040;">Challenges</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Resistance to change and internal skill gaps  Cybersecurity risks and data privacy concerns  High initial costs of advanced technologies  Digital divide between large and small traders 	<h3 style="color: #0070c0;">Opportunities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Capacity building through continuous training and upskilling  Public-private partnerships to share innovation costs  Using global WCO standards to ensure interoperability  Leveraging innovation to improve revenue and security
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VI. Conclusion

By embracing innovation and strengthening collaboration with stakeholders, Customs administrations can balance trade facilitation with enforcement more effectively than ever before.

The Smart Customs journey demands vision, leadership, and sustained cooperation. It represents a strategic transformation that goes far beyond technology, redefining mindsets, processes, and partnerships. By embracing innovation and collaboration, Customs administrations can shift from traditional control-based models to agile, intelligence-led partners in global supply chains.

This transformation enables a balanced and dynamic approach to trade facilitation and enforcement—reducing costs and improving predictability for businesses, while safeguarding revenue and national security. As global trade evolves at unprecedented speed, Smart Customs will be the critical enabler of secure, seamless, and sustainable international commerce, in line with the strategic direction of the World Customs Organization.



Digital and Paperless Systems Streamline Trade Operations



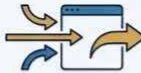
Electronic Declarations

Replaces paper-based systems, reducing manual intervention and clearance times.



E-Payments

Simplifies financial transactions and improves revenue collection efficiency.



Single Window Platforms

Enables traders to submit regulatory information once for all participating government agencies, eliminating duplication and delays.

Digital Customs Clearance Dashboard:
“Real-time digital systems enabling faster and transparent Customs clearance.”

Images created by Google NotebookLM



Modernizing Trade in Complex World: Thailand's Smart Customs Initiative

By Chayuth Yongchaicharn, Customs Intelligence Center, The Customs Department of Thailand

The landscape of international trade is evolving at an unprecedented pace, shaped by the convergence of frontier technologies, heightened geopolitical uncertainty, and increasingly sophisticated illicit activities. These forces pose significant challenges for Customs administrations worldwide, requiring rapid adaptation to an ever-changing and complex operating environment. The modernization of the Customs Department of Thailand through its Smart Customs initiative marks a significant leap toward strengthening Thailand's national competitiveness within the global trading dynamics.

Central to this transformation is the integration of advanced digital infrastructure, most notably the Customs Department's paperless declaration system. The transition from manual, paper-based procedures to a fully electronic environment has substantially reduced clearance times while minimizing human error and enhancing regulatory compliance. This digital foundation is further reinforced by the National Single Window (NSW) initiative, which serves as a unified, real-time data-sharing platform. By connecting the Customs Department with multiple government agencies and key stakeholders, the NSW enables a single submission process for trade data, permits, and regulatory documents. At present, some stakeholders

and agencies have not yet fully aligned their documentation and permit processes with the NSW. We strongly encourage all relevant parties to synchronize their documents with the NSW. For instance, the Customs Department's NSW system is fully prepared to integrate Rules of Origin Certificates with other stakeholders' systems. Such seamless interoperability will eliminate redundant procedures, expedite permit approvals, promote Green Customs objectives, and substantially enhance the overall ease of doing business.

Beyond administrative efficiency, the Customs Intelligence Center has undertaken substantial investments in advanced security and inspection capabilities to sustain an effective equilibrium between seamless trade facilitation and robust national security. High-definition CCTV systems provide comprehensive surveillance at ports nationwide, strengthening accountability and situational awareness. These measures are complemented by high-performance X-ray scanning technologies that enable non-intrusive inspections of cargo. Such systems allow authorities to rapidly detect concealed illicit goods without disrupting trade flows, a capability essential in managing the scale and speed of modern commerce. The integration of artificial intelligence further enhances the inspection

Thailand

ecosystem by identifying high-risk patterns and potential illicit activities. X-ray scan findings related to emerging illicit activities are shared with international Customs counterparts via CIC Alerts to support intelligence-led cooperation, strengthening regional intelligence cooperation and enabling other administrations to detect similar threats across borders.

The Smart Customs initiative reflects Thailand’s strategic commitment to establishing itself as a leading logistics and trade hub within the ASEAN region and as an active participant in the complex dynamics of global commerce. By harmonizing digital platforms

such as the National Single Window (NSW) with physical innovations, including X-ray inspection technologies, and strengthening international cooperation through working groups such as the bi-annual CECWG and the annual RILO A/P Liaison Meetings, the Customs Department of Thailand is not only simplifying the experience for global traders but also ensuring a secure and data-driven future for the nation's economy.



Officers from the Customs Department of Thailand participate in the 38th CECWG Meeting in Jakarta, underscoring enhanced Customs collaboration across the Southeast Asia region through joint initiatives and operations, including the JCC Operation and Green Customs Initiatives.



Officers from the Customs Department of Thailand participate in the 36th RILO A/P Liaison Meeting in Tokyo, underscoring strengthened Customs collaboration across the RILO A/P region through joint initiatives, including intelligence-sharing initiatives, updates on emerging illicit trends, and cooperation via the CEN intelligence platform.

Smart Customs: Advancing Innovation and Collaboration through Defence Industry Free Zone privileges

By Tax Incentives Division

Introduction:

This article aims to publicise the Customs Department of Thailand’s strategic operations, reflecting the vision of “Smart Customs: Advancing innovation and collaboration.” This vision is demonstrated through the provision of Customs tax incentives in the form of a Free Zone designated for the defence industry.



Strengthening the National Defence Industry via Customs Tax Incentives

The Customs Department of Thailand actively promotes the domestic defence industry by leveraging tax incentives under the “Free Zone” scheme. Recognising that national security and the safety of citizens’ lives and property are cornerstone national policies, the Thai Government has placed strong emphasis on supporting and promoting research and development in defence science and technology as a fundamental pillar for safeguarding national interests. To ensure national resilience, Thailand is transitioning toward a “Smart Defence Industry”, characterised by indigenous technological self-reliance and global competitiveness. This transition is driven by the integration of multi-sectoral cooperation: the public sector, the private sector and civil society. Furthermore, the Thai Government has established strategic

guidelines to enhance national security capabilities by fostering research and development and empowering the private sector to engage in industrial-scale production for both governmental and commercial purposes.



Free Zone

The Role of Customs as a Strategic Supporter: Empowering the National Defence Industry

“A Free Zone designated for the defence industry is classified as a special Free Zone for activities that contribute to the national economic system. It functions as a critical trade enabler, significantly reducing production costs and facilitating seamless trade operations.”

Customs tax incentive measures serve as vital instruments for stimulating both direct and indirect economic growth. In alignment with the Thai government’s policy to position the defence industry as one of Thailand’s “New S-Curve” industries, the Customs Department of Thailand supports the domestic production and development of machinery, equipment, and tools used in defence manufacturing. This approach aims to strengthen national self-reliance in defence production while enhancing industrial competitiveness. Accordingly, the Customs Department

of Thailand provides robust support to domestic defence manufacturers by enabling them to develop and utilise machinery, equipment, and tools for defence production, with the objective of achieving international-standard defence products. This support is delivered through Customs tax incentives under the Free Zone regime, which helps reduce production costs and streamline operational processes for entrepreneurs. Ultimately, these measures contribute positively to the broader economic system and reinforce Thailand’s long-term industrial and security objectives.





REGIONAL UPDATES

Asia/Pacific Customs News #77



Disrupting Illicit Tobacco: Australia's Multi-Layered Response and the Power of Partnerships

The illicit tobacco trade continues to deprive governments of significant revenue while enabling transnational organized crime groups to expand activities nationally and internationally. The cumulative impact is not only financial; it undermines legitimate businesses, public health and wider community safety, and can involve violent criminal activity.

The Australian Picture

Australia is facing a rapidly expanding illicit tobacco market driven by the high-profit and low-risk nature of this trade and the sophistication of transnational organized crime groups. The Australian Border Force (ABF) plays a critical role in addressing illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes pre-border, at the border and post border, working alongside international and domestic partners. Recent data highlights the scale of the challenge and the increasing pressure placed on Australia's border and enforcement agencies.

During the 2024-2025 financial year, the ABF achieved significant results at the border, including seizing more than 6 million vapes and accessories, more than 2.5 billion cigarette sticks and over 438 tonnes of loose-leaf tobacco, with the illicit cigarettes and loose-leaf tobacco valued at over \$4.4 billion in potential tobacco excise duty. This is a 320 per cent increase in the number of illicit cigarettes

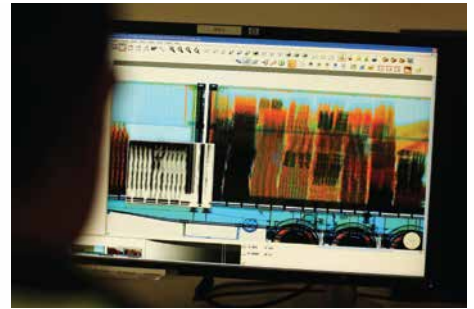
seized compared to four years ago.

Australia's Illicit Tobacco and E-Cigarette (ITEC) Commissioner estimates that illicit tobacco now represents between 50 to 60 per cent of Australia's national market, and is valued at between AUD \$4.1–\$6.9 billion, while illicit e-cigarettes account for over 95 per cent of the market and an estimated AUD \$1.6 billion in value. Combined, excise and Customs revenue losses for 2024–25 are estimated at AUD \$7.7–\$11.8 billion.

National Disruption Efforts

To counter the scale of this threat, the Australian Government has strengthened its national enforcement posture. Established in October 2025, The Illicit Tobacco National Disruption Group (NDG) – led by the ABF – brings together traditional and non-traditional agencies united in purpose to break the illicit tobacco business model, to target mid-level criminals and enablers activities in the illicit tobacco supply chain.

The NDG complements the Illicit Tobacco Taskforce (ITTF) and focuses on removing the commercial viability of illicit tobacco sales by disrupting distribution channels, financial flows and supply chains to expose perceived criminal safe zones and increasing the operational risk.



This work operates alongside the ABF-led Illicit Tobacco Taskforce (ITTF), a multi-agency partnership harnessing the capabilities of the Department of Home Affairs, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, Australian Transactions Reports and Analysis Centre, Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions and the Australian Taxation Office. The Taskforce focuses on serious and organized crime syndicates, using its combined intelligence and investigation powers to dismantle large-scale importation and manufacturing operations and seize proceeds of crime.

When speaking about recent illicit tobacco disruption efforts, ABF Commander Greg Dowse said the ABF was committed to working with international and partner agencies to break the business model of illicit tobacco at every stage of the supply chain.

“Our work doesn't start at the border; it starts well before illicit goods ever reach Australia and continues post-border through intelligence sharing and coordinated disruption activities with our law enforcement and regulatory partners,” Commander Dowse said.

International Cooperation

A key element of the ABF's strategy is to stop illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes offshore, well before they reach the Australian border. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation is central to disrupting supply chains at every stage – from source countries through transit and to destination markets. Intelligence sharing, joint targeting and enforcement operations significantly increase the pressure on

criminal networks, reducing and disrupting their illegal operations.

An example of this cooperation in the World Customs Organization context is Operation LYNX, funded by the Australian Government. The operation brings together Customs administrations from across the Asia/Pacific region – including: Australia; Bangladesh; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Malaysia; the Philippines; Sri Lanka; Singapore; and Thailand – to jointly target illicit cigarettes, alcohol, and vapes.

The recently completed Phase 3 of the operation resulted in the seizure of more than 150 million cigarettes, over 27,000 kilograms of raw tobacco, and in excess of 150,000 vapes. The operation also strengthened long-term operational partnerships across the region and enhanced information and intelligence sharing capabilities.

Success in tackling illicit tobacco relies on both a coordinated national response and strong international partnerships. By integrating enforcement activity, intelligence sharing, international collaboration and joint targeting, Customs administrations and their law enforcement partners can significantly increase the risk and difficulty for criminal networks to profit from illicit tobacco. This coordinated pressure ultimately constrains criminals' ability to channel illicit proceeds into other harmful activities.

If you would like to partner with the ABF in disrupting illicit tobacco in the Asia/Pacific region, please reach out to the Australian regional contact point.

Cambodia's Journey to Full Implementation of WTO TFA Turning the Compliance into Competitiveness and Prosperity

1. Background on Cambodia's Trade Facilitation Journey

Cambodia's border modernization efforts began long before the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), driven by its landmark 2004 WTO accession and the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) focus on trade-led growth. Although the TFA officially took effect in February 2017, Cambodia showed early commitment by ratifying it in 2016. By August 2017, the country notified a 60% compliance rate for Category A provisions, leaving the remaining 40% under Categories B and C to be implemented through transition periods and technical assistance.

2. Key Drives behind the Accomplishment

Over seven years, Cambodia systematically implemented the remaining 40% of its trade facilitation provisions, reaching full compliance through a deliberate three-pillar strategy: (1) institutional arrangements and strategic vision, (2) targeted gap resolutions, and (3) strategic collaboration.

2.1 Institutional Arrangements and Strategic Vision

The primary driver for this achievement was strong high-level political will, channeled through the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF). Under the leadership of His Excellency Chou Vichith, Secretary of State of Ministry of Economy and Finance, who is the chairperson of NCTF, trade facilitation was elevated from a technical requirement to a high-priority national agenda. This top-down commitment ensured that the National Roadmap and Action Plan were executed with discipline, aligning the objectives of all relevant ministries toward a common goal.

A central element of this journey was the "whole-of-government" approach. The National Roadmap on Trade Facilitation 2022-2025 was developed from early design to final execution with the active involvement of all stakeholders, including government agencies, the private sector, and development partners. The full functioning of the

By January 2025, Cambodia achieved full implementation of its TFA measures earlier than the definitive date, transitioning complex Category B and C requirements into fully operational procedures. This milestone distinguishes Cambodia on the global stage; as of February 2026, the WTO Trade Facilitation Database shows the average implementation rate for developing and Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) remains at 83.7%. This article examines the pivotal factors behind this achievement and explores how this rooted in Cambodia's vigilance and commitment—safeguards the nation's prosperity and security.

NCTF and the Secretariat has been vital in day-to-day operations, moving from the initial drafting of the action plan to the successful implementation of trade facilitation measures.

The organizational structure of the NCTF, its Secretariat, and its working groups were designed specifically for daily operational efficiency. With the General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia (GDCE) serving as the Secretariat, under the leadership of His Excellency Dr. Kun Nhem, Minister Attached to Prime Minister, Director General of the General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia, the NCTF proved highly effective, as over 90% of WTO TFA provisions are Customs-related. Furthermore, two specialized technical working groups—the Technical Working Group on Customs and the Technical Working Group on Other Government Agencies (OGAs)—were established to bridge the implementation gaps for Category B and Category C measures.

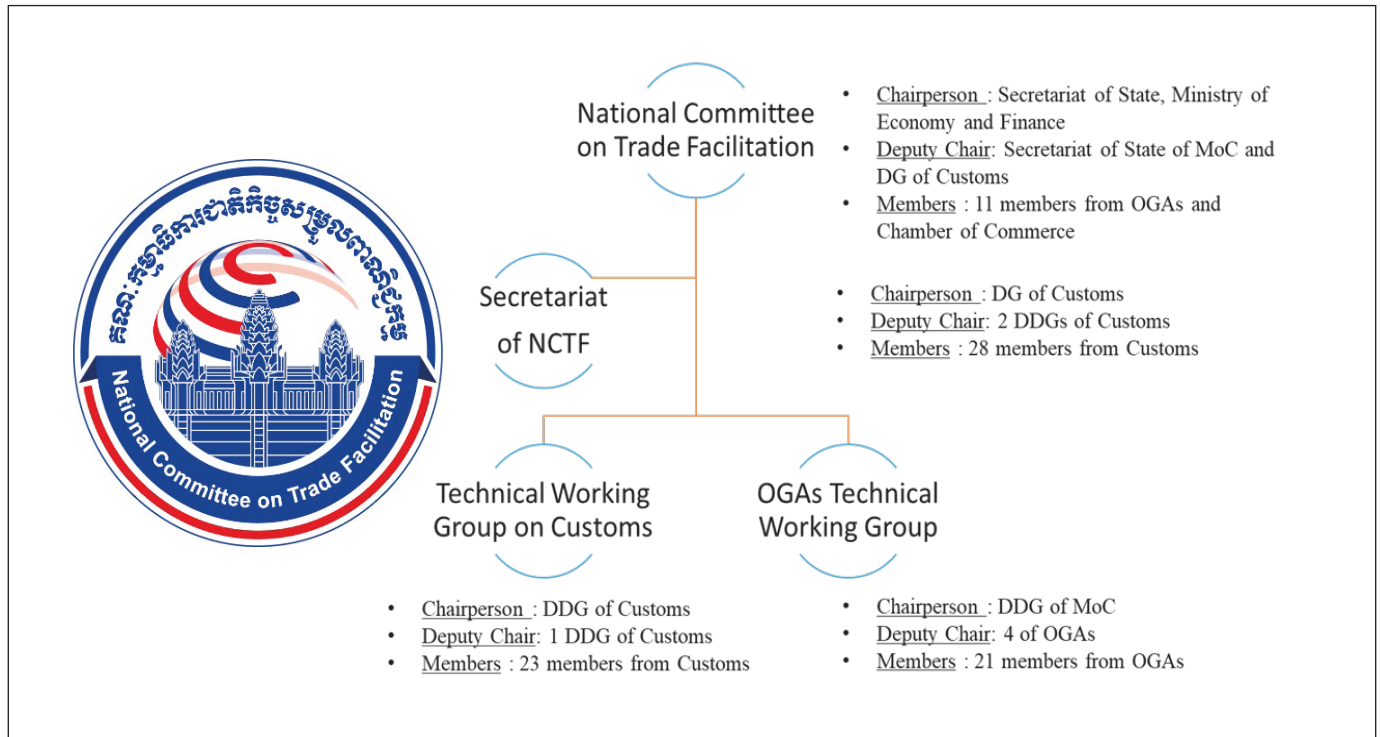


Figure 1: Organization Structure of the National Committee on Trade Facilitation
 Source: National Roadmap on Trade Facilitation 2022-2025

Strategic Vision for Competitiveness and Prosperity

The NCTF’s work is guided by the National Roadmap on Trade Facilitation 2022–2025, a strategic framework designed to enhance economic competitiveness through phased action plans and robust coordination between Customs, OGAs, and the private sector. It provides a structured mechanism for monitoring WTO TFA implementation and collaborating with development partners. The roadmap is built upon four core strategies: ensuring the effective functioning of the NCTF and its Secretariat, achieving full WTO TFA compliance, strengthening stakeholder collaboration, and pursuing "beyond WTO TFA" standards to further modernize trade facilitation.

WCO Mercator Programme’s Strategic Role

Cambodia’s implementation process was bolstered by the World Customs Organization (WCO) through its Mercator Programme, which provides targeted technical assistance and capacity-building to the Cambodian Customs administration. In 2018, a WCO diagnostic mission assessed Cambodia’s TFA implementation status and identified critical areas for improvement. The 25 recommendations were subsequently integrated into the Customs Reform and Modernization Strategy and the Mercator Implementation Plan. They served as vital inputs for drafting the National Roadmap for Trade Facilitation, ensuring that TFA implementation was seamlessly aligned with broader institutional and technological reforms.



Figure 2: National Roadmap on Trade Facilitation 2022-2025
 Source: National Roadmap on Trade Facilitation 2022-2025

2.2 Progress of Trade Facilitation Measures in Category B and C

Cambodia focused heavily on bridging technical and financial gaps. By identifying measures requiring "capacity building" (Category C), the GDCE worked systematically to transform complex technical requirements into operational Customs procedures. This included the full rollout of the Cambodia National Single Window (CNSW), Modernized Release of Goods Procedures, Expedited Shipments, Pre-arrival Processing, and the AEO programme.

By 2020, the WTO-TFA compliance increased from around 60% to 83% as Cambodia notified the full implementation of provisions related to Articles 1.1 (Publication), 1.2 (Information Available through Internet), 2.1 (Opportunity to Comment and

Information Before Entry into Force), 5.3 (Test Procedures), 7.2 (Electronic Payment), 7.4 (Risk Management), 7.8 (Expedited Shipments), 10.1 (Formalities and Documentation Requirements) and 11.11-11.17 (Freedom of Transit). Two years later, in 2022, further progress was made that compliance rate increased to around 93% through the shift from Category C to B on the provision of Perishable Goods, and the notification of the definitive date to be full implementation on category C. In February 2025 Cambodia officially notified the WTO of full implementation of all TFA commitments ahead of the definitive date of Articles 1.4 (Notification), 7.7 (Authorized Economic Operator-AEO), 7.9 (Perishable Goods), 7.1 (Pre-Arrival Processing -PAP), 10.4 (National Single Windows system -NSWs), 8.2 (Border Agency Cooperation), and 11.5 (Freedom of Transit).

Cambodia

2.3 Partnership and Collaboration

Synergy between all stakeholders is another key factor for this achievement. Inspired by the WCO Safe Framework of Standard, the GDCE fostered deep cooperation with the Private Sector, Other Government Agencies (OGAs), and Development Partners. This inclusive approach ensured that the trade facilitation being modernized actually met the needs of the trade community.

Cambodia has been highly impactful in mobilizing a wide range of development partners to support its implementation efforts. Regarding technical assistance in accordance with Annex D of the WTO TFA, Cambodia has benefited significantly from technical support from the EU and Germany under the EU-German GATE and ARISE Plus Cambodia programs. In addition, the reform process has been supported by many development partners. Key development partners include the World Customs Organization (WCO) under the Mercator Programme, the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation/Swisscontact, and JICA.

At the national level, the NCTF Secretariat and the GDCE has worked closely with line ministries and border agencies to ensure coordinated implementation of trade facilitation measures. Regular consultations have also been conducted with the private sector, including business associations, logistics operators, and traders. Particular attention has been given to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which benefit from simplified procedures, reduced clearance times, and improved transparency. This approach has been essential to the successful implementation of trade facilitation reforms. By aligning the efforts of public institutions, development partners, and the private sector, Cambodia has been able to implement reforms in a coordinated and inclusive manner.

2.4 Collaboration in Investing in Connectivity Infrastructures

The Royal Government of Cambodia prioritized investment in connectivity infrastructure. Among many connectivity infrastructure projects, four major investments stand out as transformative developments that bring Cambodia closer to its trading partners and the global market:

Cambodia has significantly transformed its air connectivity through two major infrastructure milestones: the Siem Reap–Angkor International Airport (\$1.1 billion investment), which opened in October 2023 with an initial capacity of 7 million passengers, with capacity expected to reach 20 million by 2050, and the Techo International Airport (\$2 billion investment), which commenced operations in September 2025 with an initial capacity of 15 million passengers, the capacity is expected to reach 30 million by 2040 and 45 million by 2050.

The Sihanoukville Autonomous Port (PAS) is undergoing significant upgrades, including the expansion of ship berths and the acquisition of modern machinery to boost efficiency. By 2032, the port is projected to handle 3 million TEUs, and upon completion, its new 17.5-meter deep container terminal will enable large cargo ships from the United States and Europe to dock directly, eliminating the need for costly transshipment.

The Funan Techo Canal Project is a 1.7 billion investment under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). This strategic waterway will substantially reduce transportation costs and transit times from factories to international seaports, while simultaneously enhancing freedom of navigation.

The Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway, a \$2 billion BOT project spanning 187 km, has revolutionized domestic logistics by reducing travel time from nearly six hours to just two. This backbone is further strengthened by the Phnom Penh-Bavet Expressway, which commenced construction in 2023, and the Phnom Penh-Siem Reap-Poipet Expressway, currently undergoing feasibility studies to complete a nationwide high-speed road network.

3. Measuring the Prosperity and Security

In 2015, the WTO projects showed that the full TFA implementation would reduce global trade costs by an average of 14.3%, potentially boosting annual global export growth by 2.7% and world GDP by 0.5% by 2030. In 2022, the WTO confirms these gains, showing a 5% increase in global agricultural trade and a particularly significant impact on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which experienced a 2.4% rise in total exports and a 17% surge in agricultural exports.

YEAR	MERCHANDISE EXPORTS (Billions of US\$)	MERCHANDISE IMPORTS (Billions of US\$)	TRADE VOLUME (Billion USD)
2010	5.1	6.7	11.8
2015	8.5	13.2	21.7
2021	19.2	28.6	47.8
2025	31.2	33.9	65.2

Source: Compiled by GDCE statistic website

Although Cambodia has achieved full implementation of the WTO TFA, the full economic benefits of these reforms are expected to materialize more significantly over the medium to long term. As several Category C measures were only notified as fully implemented in early 2025, it is still too early to fully quantify the long-term economic gains. Nevertheless, trade facilitation remains a vital structural reform that gradually reduces trade costs, enhances competitiveness, and attracts foreign direct investment (FDI). It is already evident that full implementation is contributing to the positive momentum of several key economic indicators, as detailed below:

3.1 Impact on Trade Creation and Expansion

Cambodia's trade volume has demonstrated a remarkable upward trajectory, effectively almost doubling every five years. According to UNCTAD and GDCE statistical data, merchandise trade rose from \$11.8 billion in 2010 to \$21.7 billion by 2015; however, since the WTO TFA took effect in 2017, growth accelerated, reaching \$47.8 billion in 2021. Even amidst the supply chain disruptions of the global pandemic, this momentum continued at a resilient pace, with total trade volume surpassing \$65.2 billion in 2025. This trade expansion has been a primary driver of Cambodia's high economic growth, which averaged 7–8% over the last two decades, successfully reducing the poverty rate from over 50% in the early 2000s to approximately 15-16% as reported by World Bank in 2025. Furthermore, exports have diversified into higher value-added products while simultaneously seeing a robust rise in agricultural exports.

3.2 Impact on Revenue Generation

A significant challenge for Cambodian Customs is maintaining and increasing revenue collection despite falling average tariff rates—a result of accelerated economic integration and the implementation of multiple Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Despite these headwinds, the GDCE has consistently exceeded government revenue targets over the past 15 years, increasing its revenue collection every year. For example, collections rose from approximately \$1,3 billion in 2014 to roughly \$3,2 billion in 2019. The revenue collection was affected by the pandemic COVID-19, Nevertheless, revenue collection has been bounced back to around 32 billion in 2025. Moving forward, deeper reform and modernization in line with "TFA Plus" standards are crucial. These efforts ensure that revenue targets are met through increased trade volume and improved compliance efficiency, ultimately enhancing national competitiveness.

4. Conclusion

Although Cambodia has achieved full implementation of the WTO TFA, the full economic benefits of these reforms are expected to materialize over the medium to long term. Trade facilitation is a structural reform that gradually reduces trade costs, improves competitiveness, and attracts investment. The ongoing expansion of digital systems, risk-based management, and inter-agency coordination indicates that Cambodia is moving in the right direction. While some benefits are already observable, the most substantial impacts on competitiveness, investment, and revenue performance are expected to emerge as reforms deepen and infrastructure continues to improve.

Reaching full implementation is an impressive milestone, but in the current global climate of uncertainty and rising protectionism, it is not a final destination. The weakening of the global rules-based system requires even greater resolve. Cambodia remains steadfast in its commitment to international rules-based standards. As Cambodia looks toward graduating from LDC status by 2029, it is already exploring a new set of "TFA Plus" measures and higher standards within upcoming TFAs, such as the CPTPP. Cambodia is ready to adopt and modernize with high standard of trade facilitation for its compliance, by maintaining its current momentum of vigilance and commitment.

(For more information contact at email: cheasamnang@customs.gov.kh ; tivpolin@customs.gov.kh)

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Bridging the Gap: How Thailand's Multimodal Hub is Reshaping ASEAN Logistics

By Ms. Matchima Kiripet, Chief of Customs Service Unit 5

For landlocked ASEAN manufacturers, reaching global markets has always been a race against time. This article explores how Thailand's Zone 3 and E-Lock technology are cutting transit times and costs, turning a logistical bottleneck into a competitive advantage.

For a fashion manufacturer in Laos, getting a product to a boutique in Los Angeles has traditionally been a logistical headache. The sea route is slow, and transshipment ports are often congested. To remain competitive, the region needed a faster alternative—one that combines the economy of road transport with the speed of air freight. This is where Thailand's Multimodal Transportation Center (Zone 3) at Suvarnabhumi Airport has stepped in to change the game.

Suvarnabhumi Airport is no longer just Thailand's gateway; it has effectively become the air cargo hub for the entire CLMV sub-region. The operational flow is straightforward: goods from factories in Laos or Myanmar cross into Thailand via checkpoints like Nong Khai or Mae Sot. In the past, these trucks faced multiple redundant inspections. Today, thanks to the Electronic Lock (E-Lock) system, they move through a "Green Line"—secured and unhindered—directly to the airport.

The real innovation happens inside Zone 3. Governed by Customs Notification No. 115/2564, this facility allows for true consolidation. Logistics providers can now mix cross-border transit cargo with Thai domestic exports in the same shipment. Imagine loading garments from Laos alongside Thai electronic parts onto a single flight. This practice not only optimizes freight capacity but significantly reduces costs for all parties involved.

The efficiency we see today didn't happen overnight. A decade ago, the Customs Department of Thailand piloted RFID technology for cargo tracking. While it was a step in the right direction, real-world operations exposed issues with signal stability and blind spots. We learned from those challenges. The switch to the current E-Lock system—which offers active, real-time monitoring and immediate tamper alerts—was the decisive upgrade that gave officers the confidence to reduce physical inspections.

The success of Zone 3 is a testament to an effective Public-Private Partnership (PPP). By aligning the regulatory authority of the Customs Department of Thailand with the infrastructure expertise of AOT and AOTGA, Thailand has struck a balance between speed and security. We aren't just moving boxes; we are creating a reliable, high-speed pipeline that connects ASEAN's production lines to the world.

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Moving Forward with IMT-GT: Enhancing CIQ Capacity Building for Seamless Sub-regional Trade

By Mr. Kawin Pattaranukul,
Customs Technical Officer, Practitioner Level

The Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) has reached a new milestone in sub-regional integration. With the official signing of the Framework of Cooperation in Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (FoC in CIQ) on 27 May 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, the three nations have committed to a unified vision: facilitating the seamless movement of goods and people while strengthening the security of sub-regional supply chains. As the framework moves into its implementation phase, the focus has shifted toward the most critical engine of success - Human Capital Development.

The Customs Department of Thailand is currently preparing to coordinate a comprehensive Capacity Building and Technical Cooperation Program scheduled for 2026, strategically designed to empower CIQ personnel by bridging knowledge gaps and harmonizing the interpretation of formalities across the three nations. This initiative serves as a catalyst to streamline cross-border operations and ensure consistent regulatory application, ultimately elevating regional trade facilitation to international standards.

As member countries are in the process of finalizing the specific activity modules, the upcoming discussions will prioritize the following strategic areas as outlined in the Framework:

1. **Standardization of Procedures:** Exploring ways to harmonize Customs, immigration, and quarantine formalities to ensure a business-friendly environment.

2. **Risk Management Enhancement:** Sharing best practices for CIQ controls based on internationally accepted risk assessment practices.
3. **Coordinated Border Management (CBM):** Pioneering the feasibility of joint inspections and synchronized operating hours at adjacent border crossings.
4. **Technical Cooperation:** Establishing platforms for information exchange on technical regulations and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures.

Through the active engagement of the IMT-GT CIQ Sub-Working Group, the participants are dedicated to realizing a truly seamless environment for cross-border movement. For Thailand, this collaborative effort enhances our strategic role in regional logistics while fulfilling our commitment to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). These initiatives ensure that the FoC in CIQ is not just a document on paper, but a living mechanism that provides long-term efficiency and substantial cost-savings benefits for all stakeholders in the IMT-GT sub-region.

As we move forward, the foundation we build today through the FoC in CIQ will define the future of regional trade. The Customs Department of Thailand remains firmly committed to this spirit of cooperation, ensuring that our borders are not barriers, but gateways to shared prosperity.



CUSTOMS APPRECIATION

Asia/Pacific Customs News #77

Hong Kong, China

CHAN Po Hung

Assistant Superintendent

Mr. CHAN, who serves as an Assistant Superintendent with the Hong Kong Customs, has demonstrated exceptional leadership and innovation in enhancing the department's cybersecurity capabilities. His strategic foresight and dedication have significantly strengthened the department's resilience against evolving digital threats.

Key Achievements:

Comprehensive Training Program

One of Mr. CHAN's most notable achievements is the development and implementation of a comprehensive training program aimed at educating staff on updated security regulations and data protection measures. This initiative has not only improved staff understanding of the importance of cybersecurity but also fostered a culture of vigilance and responsibility, resulting in a significant reduction of vulnerabilities within the department.

Mitigation of Phishing Risks

In addition, Mr. CHAN has made substantial efforts to mitigate phishing risks through innovative engagement strategies. His multi-faceted approach, including department-wide training sessions, an icon figure design competition, and pre-drills simulating real-world phishing scenarios, has led to a remarkable reduction in the phishing drill click rate, well below the government-wide average.

Recognition and Accolades

Mr. CHAN's contributions have been recognized with a merit award in the Cyber Security Professional Award 2025, making him the first individual from the department to receive this prestigious accolade. This recognition underscores his excellence, innovation, and leadership in the field of cybersecurity.

Through his unwavering commitment and innovative initiatives, Mr. CHAN has not only advanced the department's cybersecurity practices but also inspired his team to achieve remarkable success. His achievements are a source of pride for the department and a testament to the impact of his leadership.



India

Shri Virendra Kumar

Additional Assistant Director

Key Achievements:

Mr. Shri Virendra Kumar, Additional Assistant Director at the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Delhi Zonal Unit, has demonstrated outstanding expertise in intelligence-led Customs enforcement and tariff policy. As Senior Intelligence Officer (2022–2026), he utilised advanced data analytics tools to detect duty evasion exceeding ₹1200 crores, with recoveries of about ₹250 crores. He led major investigations in the telecom sector, curbing misuse of exemption schemes, and exposed illicit agricultural imports protecting domestic farmers. He also handled sensitive NDPS cases and played a key role in India’s adoption of the revised HS Nomenclature, strengthening tariff alignment and international compliance standards.



India

Shri Siddharth Yadav

Intelligence Officer



Key Achievements:

Mr. Shri Siddharth Yadav, Intelligence Officer, DRI Mumbai has demonstrated exceptional commitment through intelligence-led enforcement yielding high-impact results. He contributed to the seizure of 121.75 kg of Mephedrone (₹180 crores) at Vapi, 102 kg of Ketamine (₹48 crores) at Ahmedabad, and the dismantling of a clandestine drug facility in 2025. His efforts in gold smuggling cases led to major recoveries across multiple cities, including significant seizures at CSMI Airport, Mumbai. He has also handled cases involving illicit cigarettes, red sanders, e-waste, and illegal insecticides. Across 200+ cases with seizures exceeding ₹1,000 crores, his work upholds Customs’ mandate of protecting society and national economic interests.



RECENT AND UPCOMING WCO EVENTS

January 2026	2026 WCO Technology Conference	Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates 28 - 30 January 2026
February 2026	Audit Committee	Brussels, Belgium 16 - 17 February 2026
March 2026	Regional Conference on Smart Customs	Hong Kong, China 11 - 13 March 2026
March 2026	Finance Committee	Brussels, Belgium 30 March - 1 April 2026
April 2026	Technical Committee on Customs Valuation	Brussels, Belgium 20 - 24 April 2026
May 2026	27 th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference	Hong Kong, China 17 - 20 May 2026
June 2026	94 th Session of the WCO Policy Commission	Brussels, Belgium 22 - 23 June 2026
June 2026	147 th / 148 th Sessions of the WCO Council	Brussels, Belgium 25 - 27 June 2026



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**SMART CUSTOMS:
ADVANCING INNOVATION
AND COLLABORATION**