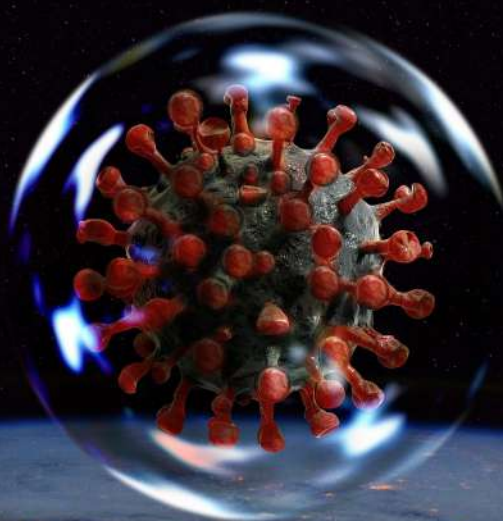


WCO ESA ROCB

ANNUAL REPORT
2021/2022

The rise of hope





WCO ESA ROCB ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

Presented to
The 28th Governing Council

12th & 13th May 2022

Mauritius

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BACKGROUND

Membership

The WCO East and Southern Africa Region comprises 24 Member Countries;



Vision

A region that facilitates trade efficiently and professionally while ensuring economic growth and intra-regional trade.

Purpose statement

To develop gender equitable, professional and modernized Customs administrations that are fair, efficient and effective in revenue collection and border management service.

Goal

To contribute to the economic growth of the Region in trade, security, social protection and human capital development.

Values

- Transparency
- Probity
- Commitment
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Cooperation

Abbreviations / Acronyms

AEO	Authorised Economic Operator
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area (African CFTA)
AFEC	African Financial & Economic Crimes Forum
AUC	Africa Union Commission
CBM	Coordinated Border Management
CCF – China	Customs Cooperation Fund - China
CCF – Japan	Customs Cooperation Fund - Japan
CCF – Korea	Customs Cooperation Fund – Korea
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area (African CFTA)
CG	Governing Council
EAC	East African Community
ESA	East and Southern Africa
HS	Harmonized System
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MC	Management Committee (of the ESA region)
PICARD	Partnerships in Customs Academic Research and Development
PSCG	Private Sector Consultative Group
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RILO	Regional Intelligence Liaison Office
RJCC	Regional Joint Coordinating Committee
RKC	Revised Kyoto Convention
ROCB	Regional Office for Capacity Building
RSG	Regional Steering Group
RTC	Regional Training Centre
SACU	South African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToT	Training of Trainers
WCO	World Customs Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Highlights of the Year

1. **The WCO ESA ROCB is gazetted! Conferment of Legal Status to the World Customs Organization, East & Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building by the Government of Kenya.**

SPECIAL ISSUE

1531

Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 191

22nd October, 2021

(Legislative Supplement No. 87)

LEGAL NOTICE NO. 212

THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES ACT

(Cap. 179)

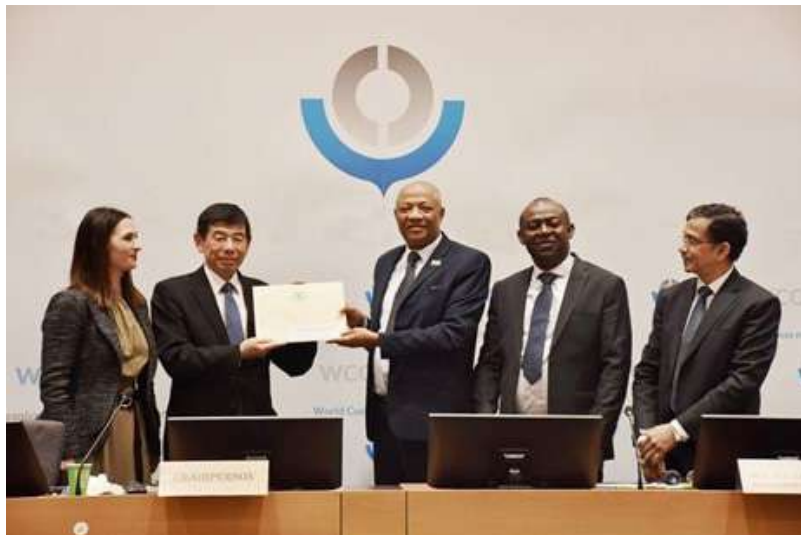
IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by section 9 of the Privileges and Immunities Act, the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs makes the following Order—

THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES (WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANISATION)
ORDER, 2021

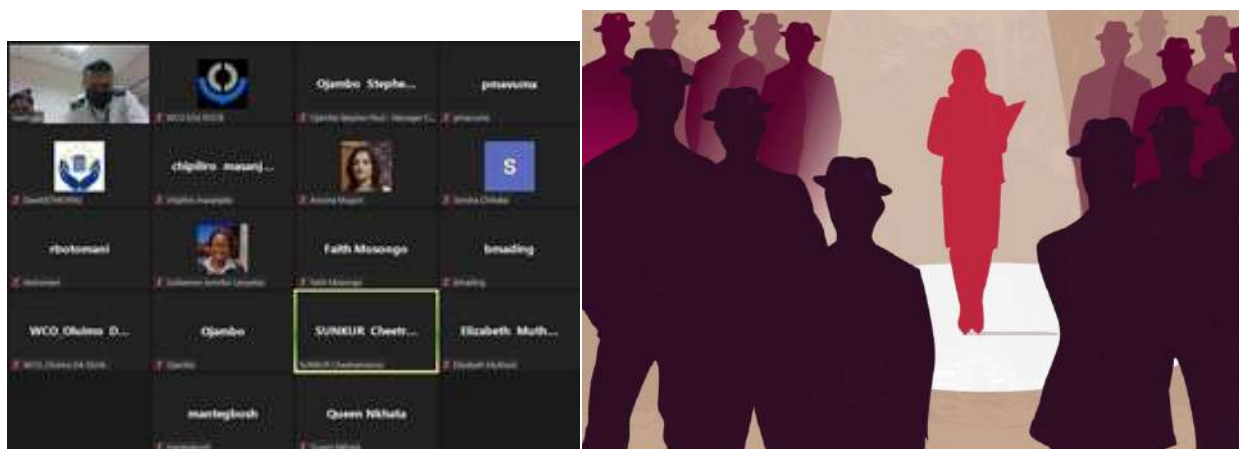
2. **Development of the WCO ESA Strategy**



3. **Comoros 🇰🇲 accedes to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and becomes the 130th Contracting Party to the Convention!**



4. The GED Framework Completed! The ESA Region Gender Agenda and the Gender and Diversity platform.



5. 3rd Regional Research conference held – November 2021





3rd WCO ESA Regional Customs Research Conference

Theme
'The effect of emerging issues on the role of Customs and Trade'
 23rd - 24th November 2021

Key Note Speakers



Larry Liza
 Director: World Customs Organization,
 East and Southern Africa,
 Regional
 Office for Capacity
 Building.



Adrian Peter Swarres
 Acting Commissioner
 Customs
 and Excise with the
 Zimbabwe Revenue
 Authority



Dr. Kunio Mikuriya
 Secretary General of the
 World Customs Organization
 (WCO)



Mr M. Sudhamo Lal, Csk
 Director General, Mauritius
 Revenue Authority

6. The Operational Customs Seminar on the Fight of Illicit Trade in Pesticides - Mombasa, Kenya.



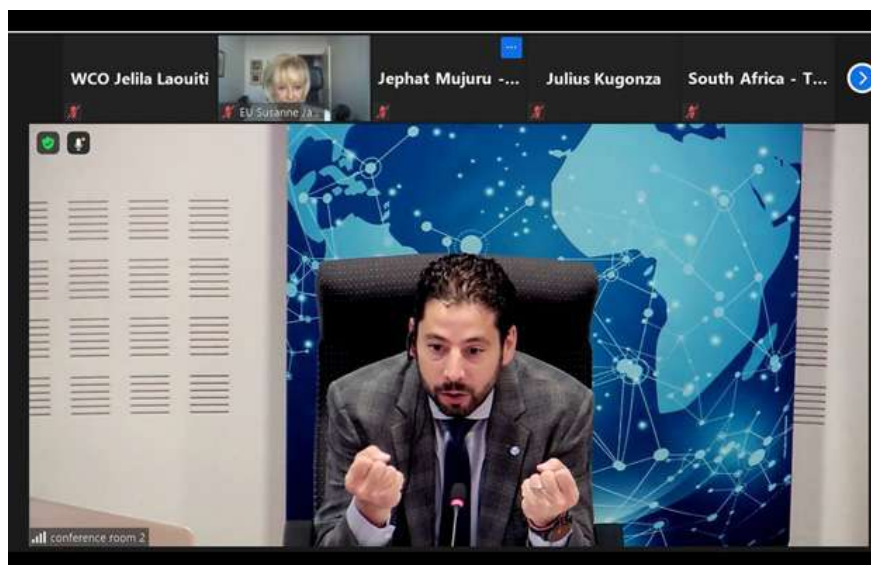
7. Measures by Customs to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic workshop in Mombasa, Kenya held from 20th to 22nd December 2021.



8. AUC – ACBC Cooperation – Enhancing Border Management in East and Southern African Region amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic



9. The WCO holds a regional consultation on the Strategic Plan with the ESA region



10. COVID Updates

- Monthly reports on the status of COVID/ Vaccination in the region and continent
- Frequent updates on global outlook of COVID
- Dedicated COVID-19 page on the website.



A COVID-19 vaccination center in Kigali, Rwanda. Photo by: Latin America News Agency

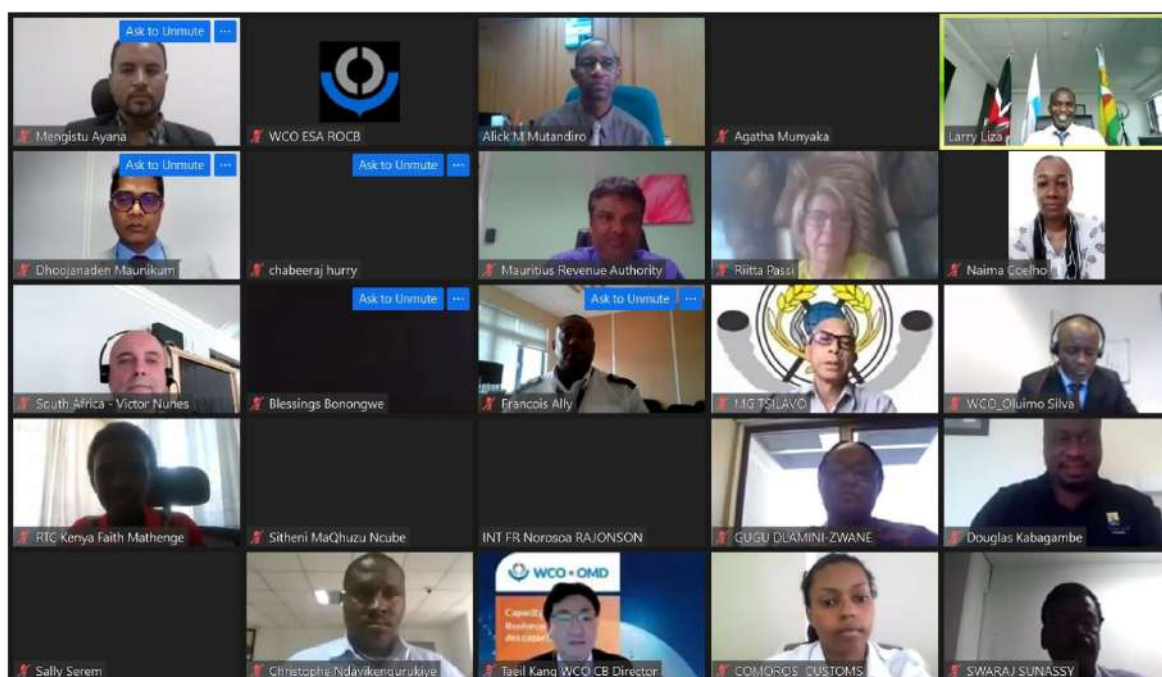
11. ESA Sotho Photo Book



12. Collaboration with the Private Sector: Private Sector Consultation Group Engagement
 – 10th WCO-ESA-RPSG Webinar – “AfCFTA: Implementation and progress to date”, WCO-ESA-RPSG Governance & portfolio nominations and Digitalization and digital trade



13. Regional meetings held virtually



34th RSG – November 2022

14. Kenya's Commissioner for Customs visits the ROCB



Reforms & Modernization Statistics in ESA

Introduction

The World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) conducted a survey on the Reforms and Modernization Statistics in the Region. This exercise was aimed at collecting information in the following areas; Harmonized System 2022, Cross Border eCommerce, Single Window, One stop Border Posts, Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), Preferred Trader Program (PTP), Cargo Tracking System, Use of ePayments and Return to normalcy.

This survey is part of the others we have been collecting over the past years in response to the Governing Council's decision calling on the ROCB to provide data on Reforms & Modernizations data aimed at providing Members with the information to help them make informed decisions in supporting national and regional development.

RESPONDENT COUNTRIES

Angola
Botswana
Burundi
Comoros
Eswatini (Kingdom of)
Ethiopia
Kenya
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Rwanda
Seychelles
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

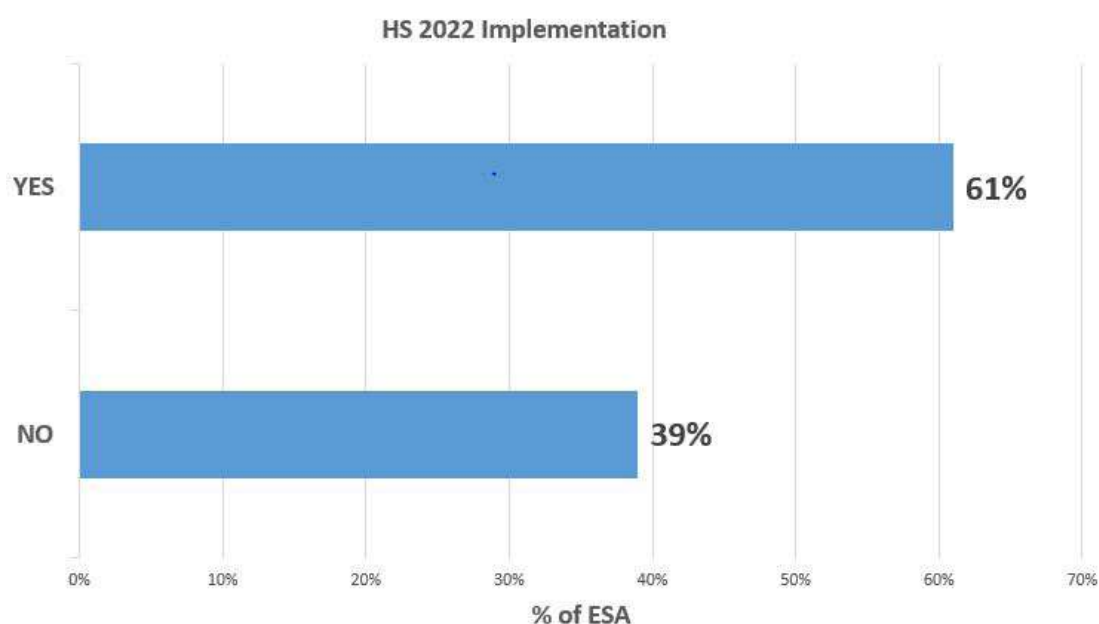
REFORMS & MODERNIZATION STATISTICS IN ESA.

	HS 2022	ePayments	Single Window	OSBP	AEO & PTP	Cargo Tracking System (CTS)	Coordinated Border Management (CBM)	Taxing Cross Border eCommerce	Travelling for missions	Hosting Physical meetings
Angola										
Botswana										
Burundi										
Comoros										
Djibouti										
Eritrea										
Eswatini										
Ethiopia										
Kenya										
Lesotho										
Madagascar										
Malawi										
Mauritius										
Mozambique										
Namibia										
Rwanda										
Seychelles										
Somalia										
South Africa										
South Sudan										
Tanzania										
Uganda										
Zambia										
Zimbabwe										
% of ESA	61%	83%	56%	60%	83%	67%	67%	17%	85%	100%

KEY

	Implemented
	Not Implemented
	Island
	Did Not Respond
	Not Applicable

1. HS 2022 Implementation

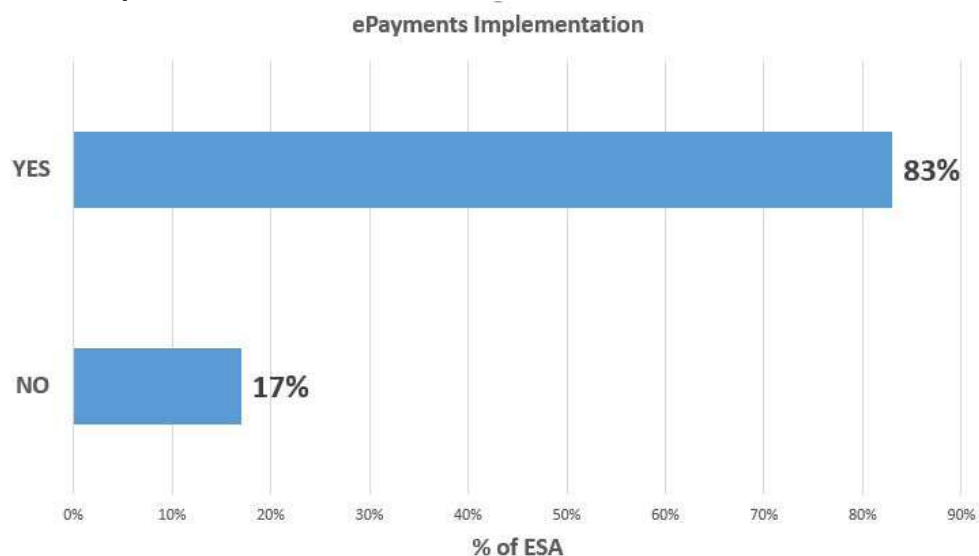


61% of the respondents have migrated to HS 2022, which aims towards greater coordination of policies and activities in the area of the Harmonized System (HS) and tariffs. Members who have not yet migrated reported that they intend to do so by mid this year (2022).

It is important to note that the WCO in collaboration with the ROCB is organizing a Regional Workshop on HS amendments to be held in Mid-May this year in Ethiopia.

Country	When you intend to migrate (Month & Year)
Angola	June 2022
Botswana	Migrated
Burundi	July 2022
Comoros	Migrated
Eswatini	Migrated
Ethiopia	Migrated
Kenya	Migrated
Lesotho	Migrated
Madagascar	Migrated
Malawi	Migrated
Mauritius	Migrated
Rwanda	July 2022
Seychelles	July 2022
South Africa	Migrated
Tanzania	July 2022
Uganda	July 2022
Zambia	Migrated
Zimbabwe	2022

2. ePayment Implementation

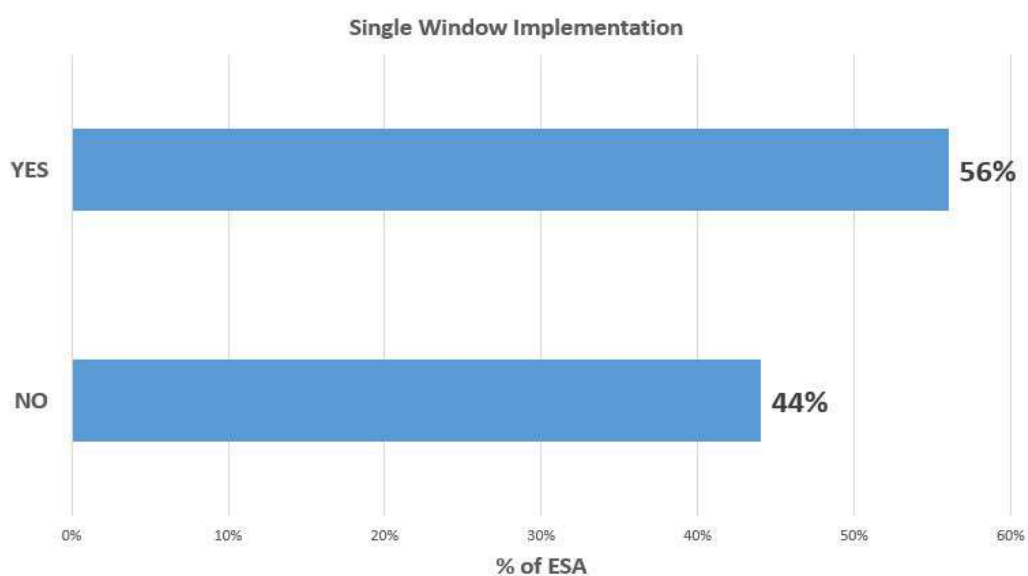


83% has implemented ePayments as one of their mode of payment of taxes. It was observed that there's demand for Electronic Payments / Cashless commerce due to the following reasons among others;

- it saves time
- it's more efficient
- it reduces handling of cash
- it's more secure
- it generates more revenue
- it's makes administration easier i.e. Accounting, auditing
- it provides certainty of payment.

The most preferred mode of ePayment in ESA is Wire transfer followed by Mobile money then Credit/Debit cards.

3. Single Window Implementation



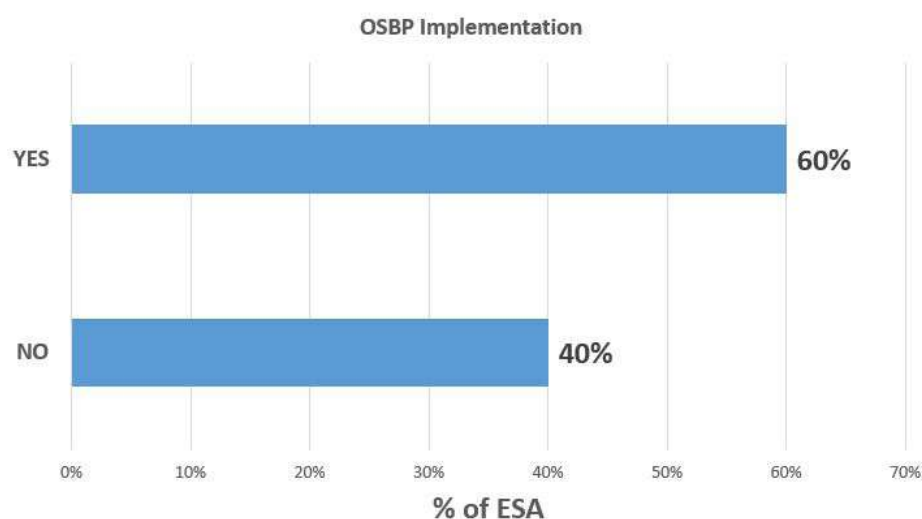
56% of the respondents have implemented Single Window as a way of promoting trade & facilitating the performance of import, export or transit-related processes and offering a single point of submission of standardized data and documents in a bid to fulfil official requirements and facilitate logistics.

Country	When you intend to migrate (Month & Year)
Angola	Pending Implementation
Botswana	Pending Implementation
Burundi	Implemented
Comoros	Implemented
Eswatini	Pending Implementation
Ethiopia	Implemented
Kenya	Implemented
Lesotho	Pending Implementation
Madagascar	Implemented
Malawi	Pending Implementation
Mauritius	Implemented
Rwanda	Implemented
Seychelles	Pending Implementation
South Africa	Pending Implementation
Tanzania	Implemented
Uganda	Implemented
Zambia	Implemented
Zimbabwe	Pending Implementation

It was observed that almost half of the Members are yet to implement Single Window due to the various challenges which may include;

- lack of political support
- lack of long-term commitment from top management
- lack of reliable institutional platform for interagency collaboration
- lack of effective management of stakeholders' expectations and perceptions
- lack of workable business procedures
- lack of architectural models
- lack data and business interoperability
- lack of laws and regulations
- lack of financial issues

4. One Stop Border Post (OSBP) Implementation

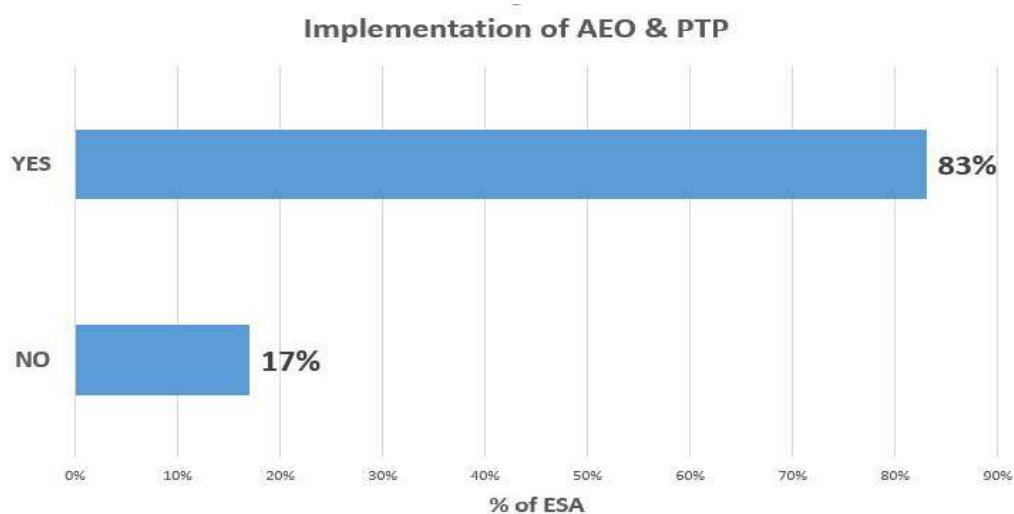


It was noted that 60% of the respondents have implemented One Stop Border Posts.

This excludes the Island nations Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles who do not require to implement OSBP.

Country	No. of Border Posts	Connected Countries
Botswana	26	4
Burundi	3	2
Eswatini	13	2
Ethiopia	1	1
Kenya	46 (7 OSBPs)	5
Lesotho	11	1
Malawi	16	3
Rwanda	6	4
Tanzania	42	8
Uganda	6 Operational 4 Upcoming	5
Zambia	27	8
Zimbabwe	15	4

5. Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) & Preferred Trader Program (PTP) Implementation

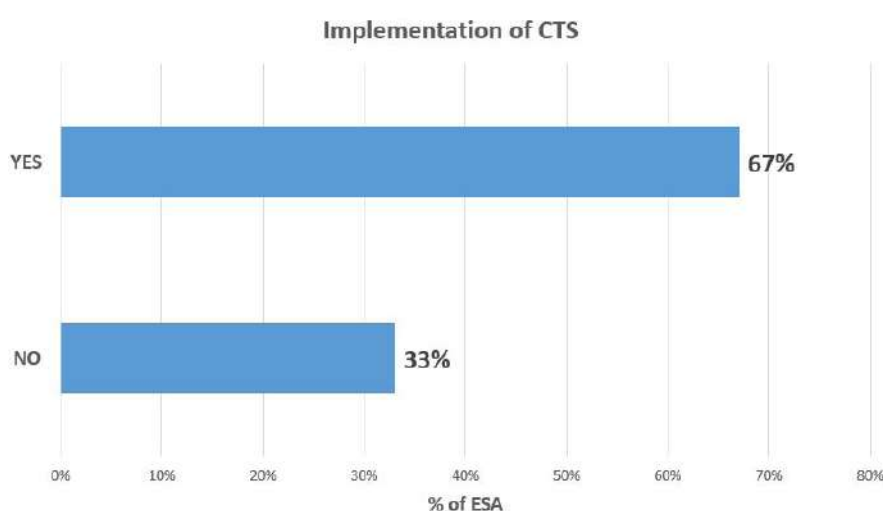


It was observed that generally ESA administrations have implemented the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) & Preferred Trader Program (PTP), with 83% of respondents having Implemented and 17% pending implementation.

Number of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) & Preferred Trader Program (PTP) Implementation

Country	Nationally		Regionally	
	AEO	PTP	AEO	PTP
Lesotho		14		
Madagascar		58		
Malawi	8			
Rwanda	53	120	135	
South Africa	146		162	
Kenya	253		19	
Tanzania	9		9	
Uganda	98		34	
Zimbabwe	12			

6. Cargo Tracking System Implementation



67% of ESA administrations have put in place a Cargo Tracking System that helps in the real-time tracking of goods shipment at any point in its journey providing real-time information. 33% are pending implementation.

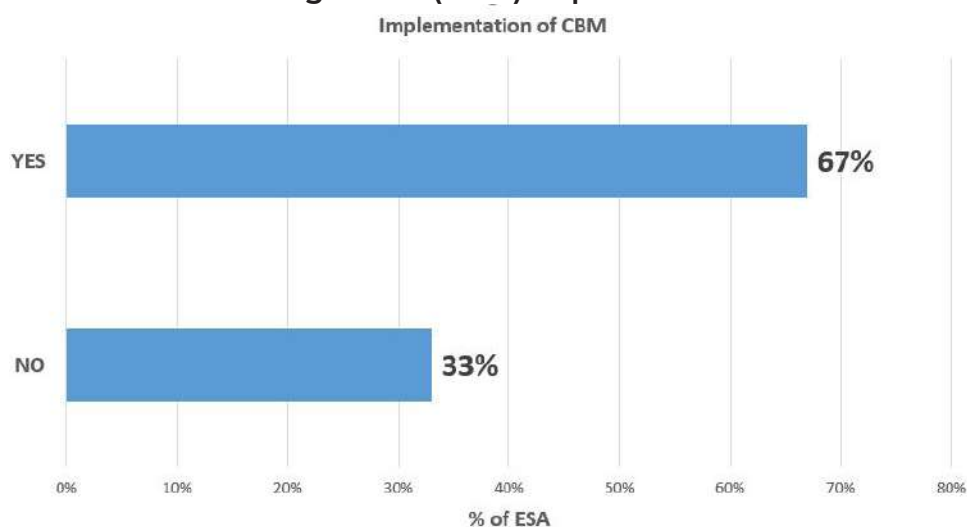
It was also noted that some Members need not to implement the Cargo Tracking System due to their geographical sizes. A case in point, Seychelles indicated that they are a very small island State and as such, it is highly unlikely that they will introduce a cargo tracking system. However, Seychelles have put in place a WCO risk management tool referred to as the “Cargo Targeting System”.

Country	Key information from Members : Cargo Tracking System
Angola	<p>The Container Control (PCC) program, an initiative aimed at banning offences, with the support of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).</p> <p>The electronic container control program (PCC) works in a centralized and technological way, in order to prepare the profile of High Risk Containers, obtaining access to an electronic search system, in addition to enabling users to track containers with specific destinations provide detailed information on the type of cargo, route and payment methods.</p> <p>The implementation of this program aligns Angola in the international fight against drug trafficking, wild animals, counterfeit and pirated products, as well as other offenses within the scope of international trade.</p>
Burundi	Burundi has a national Cargo Tracking System and is now applying to join the Regional Tracking Cargo System.
Ethiopia	Development of cargo tracking system is on progress and will be operational at the end of 2022.
Kenya	RECTS – Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System is used within the East African Community (EAC).

Malawi	MRA has implemented COMESA Virtual Cargo Tracking System (CVTFS) since 2018 . The system uses GPS system and electronic seals to track the cargo. At the moment we are only tracking containerized cargo however plans are underway to upgrade the system and be able to also track open truck and fuel tankers.
Mauritius	The WCO Cargo Tracking System enables MRA Customs perform comprehensive and effective risk assessment of import air and sea cargo thus identifying high risk shipments. Discussions were undertaken with the WCO since October 2014 for the implementation of the system in Mauritius but project implementation started on 8th February 2019 with the signature of an Agreement by MRA & WCO. Deployment of CTS at MRA Customs was conducted between 8th April 2019 and 14th September 2020 and data integration and end user testing was done between 15th September 2020 and 8th September 2021. The project went live in December 2021.
Rwanda	Rwanda started to implement ECTS in 2017 with the main objectives of facilitating and Securing cargo movement along EAC region with the aim to reduce time and cost of moving cargo along the major transport routes in East Africa in the interest of cargo, security and enhancing tax compliance, in particular to ensure a movement of cargo under Customs control from the first point of entry to the final point of exit. The system involves fitting of an e-seal with a 60-day power capacity, monitored under the GPRS platform. destination. ECTS allow identification of points where transit vehicles are delayed.
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAP – Reporting of Conveyances and Goods (RCG) - Release 1 The RCG Release 1 process cargo reports, match goods declarations to their respective cargo declarations for Fiscal purposes and match cargo declaration to associated outturn reports for Safety and Security purposes, the solution has been deployed and contain the following system functionality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All cargo and conveyance reports required by CCA including the Amendments to accommodate “Frozen Rules”. - Transshipment administration. - Goods Accounting – Fiscal & Safety/Security. - RCG risk feed to Customs Risk Engine. • NCAP – Reporting of Conveyances and Goods (RCG) - Release 2 “Rail Modality” RCG Release 2A add additional functionality to the RCG system and consisted of rail reports, including Goods Accounting (Fiscal & Safety and Security). • NCAP – Reporting of Conveyances and Goods (RCG) - Release 3 “Part-shipment Administration” The system automate Part-shipment management and allow Customs officers at land borders to automatically manage and control part-shipment cargo using the SARS Service Manager front-end system “Gate Arrival” or “Gate Exit” management system
Tanzania	Tanzania has implemented a cargo tracking system under the Public Private Partnership. The private companies have been contracted to provide gargets(E-seals) while the Public own the ECTS

Uganda	<p>Regional Electronic Tracking System, commonly known as RECTS is a trade facilitation initiative of Revenue administrations of three EAC partner states of Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. This initiative is in line with WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement which aims at easing flow of goods across borders, making trade cheaper, faster and predictable.</p> <p>Prior to this, each of the independent revenue Authorities operated independent Electronic Cargo Tracking Systems (ECTS). Uganda launched its Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS) in May 2014 but this was later replaced by RECTS in February 2017 after a directive by the Northern Corridor Heads of State summit.</p> <p>The system enables real time tracking of transit cargo from point of loading to its final destination within Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda through an online digital platform. The system is comprised of an e-seal, fuel sensors (efuel), Centralized monitoring centres (CMCs) in Kampala, Nairobi and Kigali, Rapid response units (RRU) along the transit routes.</p> <p>Other features of RECTS which are yet to be operationalized include the Smart gate operations, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) along transit routes, and the CCTV camera system at customs stations. With full operationalization of all the features of RECTS, more and/or enhanced benefits will be realized for both Government and the private sector.</p>
Zambia	<p>In Zambia, the Border Management and Trade Facilitation Act of 2018 (Act no. 18 of 2018) of the Laws of Zambia provided for formation of Border Management Committee which is aimed at enhancing border coordination among government agencies on the Zambian side and the adjoining neighboring country. They are required to provide simplified arrangements with our neighbors in the clearance process in order to provide for the efficient movement of both goods and human traffic. The ultimate aim is to provide quality services to all stakeholders and facilitate trade.</p>

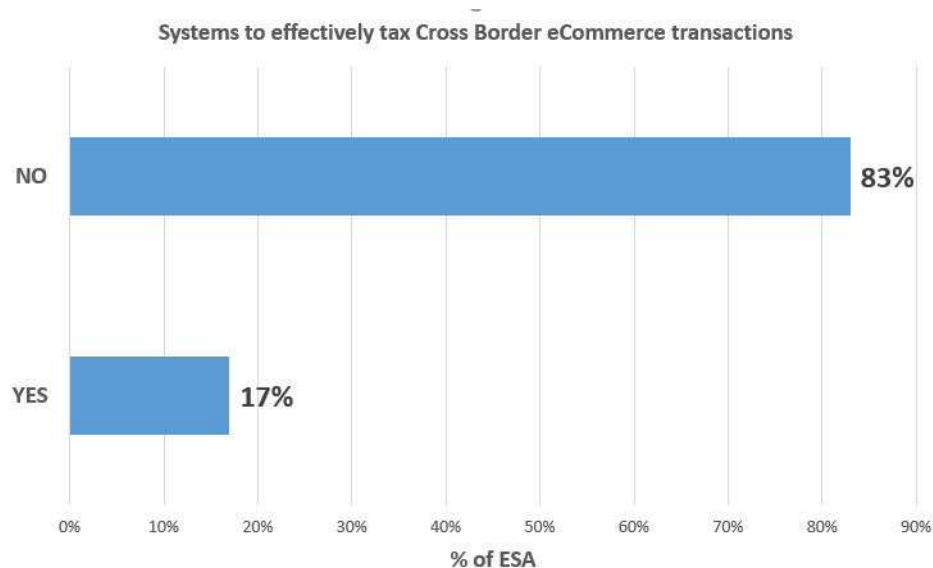
7. Coordinated Border Management (CBM) Implementation



It was noted that 67% of ESA Administrations have implemented Coordinated Border Management in managing trade and travel flows, while maintaining a balance with compliance requirements

Country	Key information from Members : Coordinated Border Management
Kenya	It's where all the stake holders are housed in the same block using the same facilities and they work together.
Madagascar	In real, we have a program about setting up this CBM with partners in the airport and port but it is still not effective
Mauritius	CBM was incorporated in our legislations in 2019 and MRA Customs started its implementation as from January 2019 at the port (Custom House) and airport (Integrated Customs Clearance Centre). This means that stakeholders will be able to conduct transactions, such as application of permits and authorizations, payment of fees, duty and taxes and clearance of goods, in a single building. Government agencies taking part in the CBM include: Customs, Health (Food Import Unit), Agriculture (National Plant Protection Office), Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, Mauritius Standards Bureau, Pharmacy Board, Division of Veterinary Services and Ministry of Environment.
Rwanda	The coordinated Border management (CBM) will be implemented after finalizing the process and procedures which is under preparation by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINCOM). What was implemented is the Joint Border Management where different Agencies working at borders meet to solve operational issues jointly.
South Africa	SARS have already implemented CBM and have since moved into an Integrated Border Management. The coordination currently undertaken is on Trade Facilitation, Travel Facilitation as well as Border Security. SARS co-exist with the Border Management Agency (BMA) and we have since signed a coordination agreement.
Tanzania	In all border posts which have a status of OSBP physical examination is carried jointly once.
Uganda	Customs cannot work in isolation and therefore needs to coordinate and collaborate with relevant stakeholders in the goods clearance value chain. Uganda Revenue Authority works harmoniously with other government agencies that take part in the release of goods. Some of the agencies we work with include; Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), National Drug Authority (NDA), Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, Security Agencies among others that operate at the various OSBPs. CBM has reduced the clearance times and cumbersome cross border procedures because most of the required controls or approvals are automated at the border.

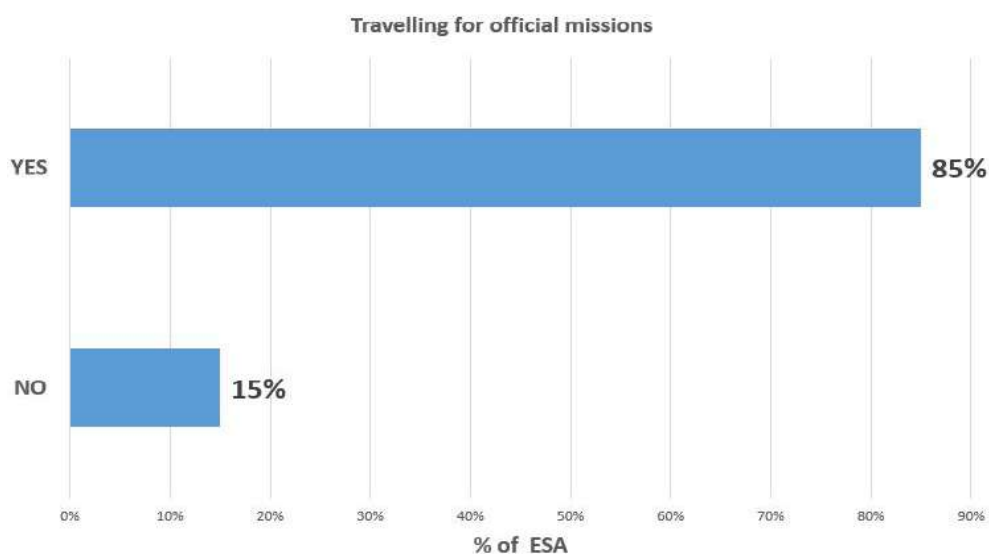
8. Systems to effectively tax Cross Border eCommerce transactions



It was observed that 83% of ESA Administrations do not have in place systems to effectively tax Cross Border eCommerce transactions on platforms such as Amazon, eBay among many others. Very few Members have these systems which include Mauritius, Rwanda and Tanzania.

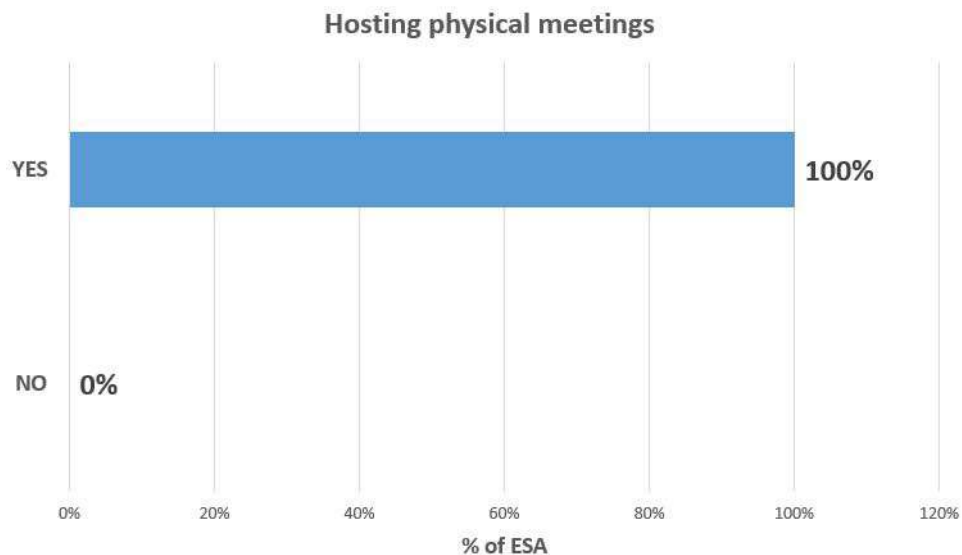
Country	Key information from Members : Systems to effectively tax Cross Border eCommerce transactions
Mauritius	MRA Customs implemented the e-Courier system in January 2022. This is a completely paperless platform designed to allow Courier operators and members of the public to submit simplified declarations and effect payment online to clear courier consignments. The system provides full statistics on importations made through courier services, in terms of quantity and volume and in terms of amounts of duties and taxes collected or exempted. Moreover, the de minimis allowance for making a customs declaration has been reduced from Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,000.
Rwanda	Currently China and the United Arab Emirates are the main eCommerce commercial partners and online ordering typically goes through Alibaba, Ali Express and Dubai Ports (DP) World through its e-commerce platform, DUBY.com. Most Rwandan importers use these long-term suppliers and orders are transmitted by email and phone. Payments are transmitted through Western Union, MoneyGram, and HubShil. The Imported goods are taxed referring to the payments done between importers and suppliers by considering orders and papers justifying the payments to know the real value of the goods.
Tanzania	All transactions made online for physical goods will be entered into the country through the ports or borders through courier companies, or accompanied baggage. We have control mechanisms to ensure the goods are properly taxed.

9. a. Travel for official missions



It was noted that 85% of ESA Administrations are travelling for official missions. This is as a result of various countries easing their travel restrictions as well as the major strides being achieved in the ongoing vigorous vaccination exercises currently ongoing in all Member Administrations.

b. Nature of meetings



100% of ESA has fully resumed to holding/hosting physical meetings which is as a result of the reduction of COVID-19 cases also widespread vaccination

INTRODUCTION

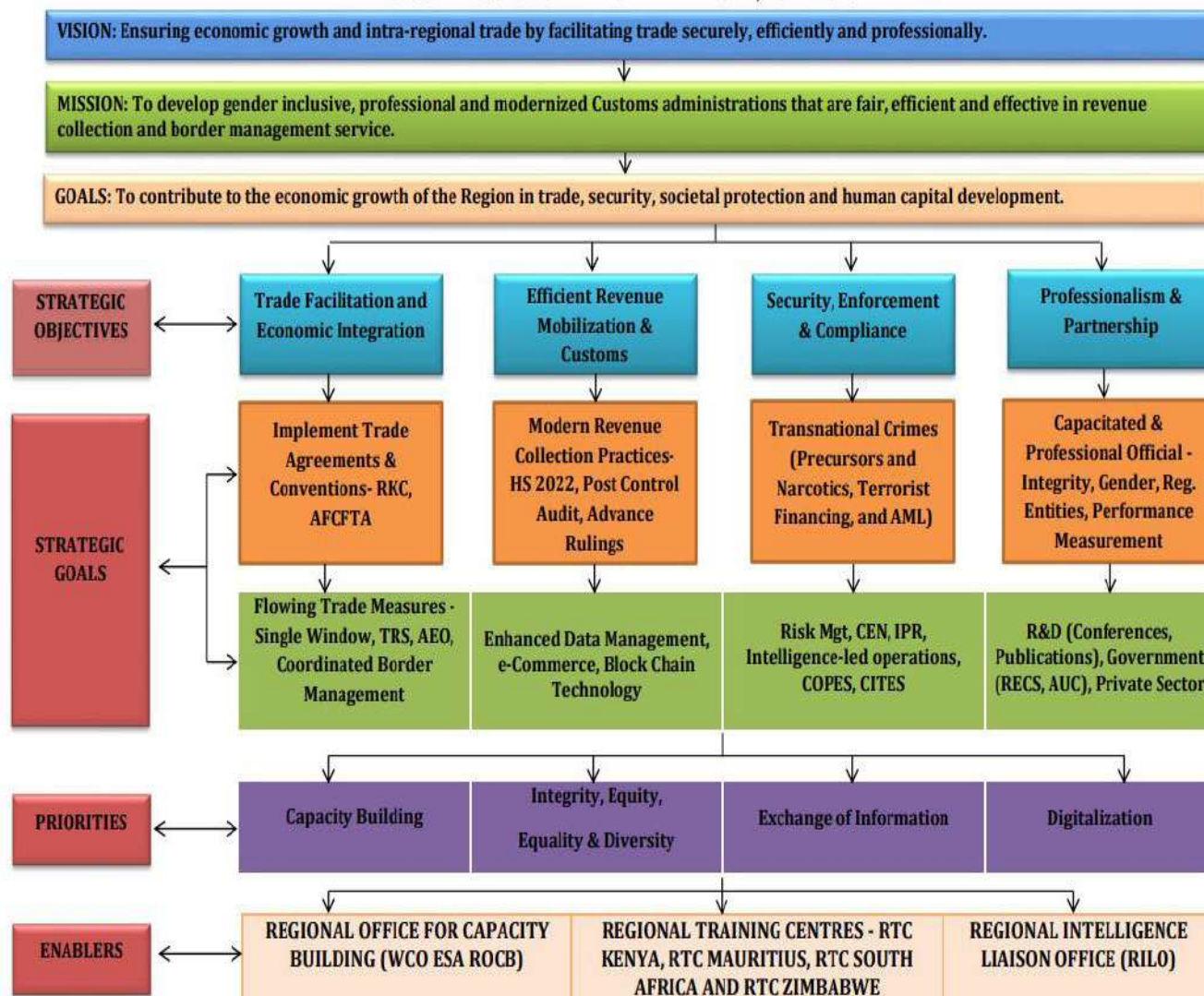
The COVID-19 pandemic continued to ravage our land in the just ended year 2021/2022, with our world, and certainly Customs, continuing to suffer from its effects. Through it all though, Customs continue to grow in its resilience, adopting new work models to ensure proper functioning – within Customs administrations, as well as the Regional Office for Capacity Building, our other entities, and our headquarters in Brussels. This near year is steadily seeing us return to normal, while holding on to the lessons we have learned. While the virus remains active in our societies, we are seeing increasingly lower positivity rates, lower mortality and morbidity rates.

This is the Annual Report for the financial year 2021/2022 of the World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building. The reporting format takes up the flow of the Regional Strategy in line with its objectives aiming to; Promote Growth in Intra-Regional Trade, Promote Fair and Efficient Revenue Mobilization, Strengthen Intra-Regional Compliance and Enforcement and Enhance Integrity and professionalism in Human Capital and is aimed at providing Members and all our development partners with information needed to make strategic decisions at a glance. This annual report goes further to integrate the reports of the other regional entities and stakeholders in one, including those of RTCs and RILO, the WCO ESA Project, the Private Sector Consultation group, among others.

The report also highlights capacity building activities and initiatives, programs and projects, and other statuses in regional matters and decisions over the said period. The Annual Financial Statements, reviewed by the external auditor and the region's Finance and Governance Committee (FGC), are presented separately.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to share with you the framework of the proposed ESA Regional Strategy 2022/2025, which the Governing Council is expected to approved, below:

PROPOSED WCO ESA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK, 2022-2025



This report is presented for discussions by the 28th Governing Council Meeting.



The 27th Extra- Ordinary Governing Council of the WCO ESA took place on MAY 6 2021, virtually and attended by delegates from our Member countries and graced by the WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya. The ESA Vice Chair, Mr. Philiso P. Valashia, Botswana, chaired the meeting. The GC focused on countering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, regional strategy, as well as finance and governance matters.

Status and outcomes of the 27th Governing Council

Items for Decision

Decision 1

The Governing Council:

- a) Directed that a Comprehensive Analysis of the ESA Strategy be undertaken - [the Management committee implemented the Governing Council directive to establish a Virtual Strategy Working Group \(VSWG\) that is spearheading the development of the new ESA Regional Strategy \(2022-25\). The new strategy will focus on the following key areas/objectives: Trade Facilitation & Integration; Efficient Revenue Mobilization & Customs Modernization; Security, Enforcement & Compliance; and Professionalism & Partnerships. Digitization and data management integrated into all the areas of strategic focus. The first draft was completed in Mid-March and sent to Members for their views and input before finalizing by the Working Group. This will be further circulated to the Directors' General for their perusal before adoption at the 28th Governing Council in May 2022.](#)
- b) Directed the Management Committee to coordinate establishment of the Strategy Working Group – [Ref. a \(above\).](#)
- c) Directed the Strategy Working Group to submit progress on the new Strategy by November 2021 – [Ref. a \(above\).](#)
- d) Directed the RILO Office to conduct survey of member administration needs, the results of which will inform the next steps in ensuring members' participation in RILO activities – [Done - Ref. RILO Annual Year report.](#)
- e) Encouraged members to participate at WCO Enforcement Operations and share reports – [Done - Ref. RILO Annual Year report.](#)

Decision 2

The Governing took note of:

- a) The status of Members accession and implementation of the RKC and WTO TFA;
- b) The ongoing work towards AfCFTA implementation;
- c) Members' preparations on migration to HS 2022;
- d) Capacity Building updates;
- e) ESA Research conference planned for towards end of 2021 – [The research conference was held virtually on 23rd and 24th November 2021.](#)
- f) Plans to holding ESA IT Conference by December 2021 – [Circumstances did not allow hosting of an additional conference in 2021. The conference will thus be held in 2022 based on the region's IT needs outlined during the regional Strategy Consultations and the actions stipulated in the proposed Regional Strategy.](#)

Decision 3:

The Governing Council:

- a) Acknowledged, with appreciation, the comprehensive ROCB Annual Report;
- b) Directed the RSG to reflect on how to deal with having two sub-committees of Director's General of Customs under the African Union Commission and the AfCFTA Secretariat by June 2021. – [This was actioned by the RSG in their meeting in November 2021.](#)
- c) Directed the ROCB to assess the impact of E-Learning and Online Training Modules, in consultation with the WCO Secretariat – [The ROCB carried out a survey to assess the impact of E-Learning and Online Training Modules. \(shared document\).](#)
- d) Noted the support from the GTS and EU-WCO HS Programme on migration to the HS 2022 and urged Members to continue leveraging on this support to achieve their migration within the set timelines;
- e) Noted that the ESA Research Conference will be held virtually towards the end of 2021 and that RTC Kenya, in partnership with African Tax Administration Forum, will host an African continental research conference on Tax and Customs in September 2021;
- f) Noted that the WCO remains committed to supporting Members with capacity building initiatives, as highlighted in their Needs Assessment Templates, especially through the Mercator and EU-WCO HS Programmes;
- g) Congratulated the winners of the ESA Photo Contest 2021 (Angola – Winner, Mauritius – 1st Runner Up, Malawi – 2nd Runner Up).

Decision 4

The Governing:

- a) Considered and approved the Financial Statements of WCO ESA ROCB submitted by External Auditors;
- b) Noted that the ROCB office is now registered and recognized as legal entity in Kenya; and
- c) Thanked the Government of Kenya and Kenya Revenue Authority for the registration of the office, granting it legal status.

Decision 5

The Governing Council:

- a) Approved and adopted the integrated WCO ESA (ROCB & RILO) budget for 2021/2022;
- b) Considered and approved a 10% increase in the ICT intern remuneration;
- c) Directed the FGC to ensure that the proposal to employ the intern on a permanent basis be implemented by June 2021 – [This has not been done but is due for action as the ROCB has now been gazetted by the Kenyan Government and acquired the office PIN. It is hoped that this will be concluded by June 2022.](#)

Decision 6

The Governing Council:

- a) Considered and adopted the new template for Financial Statements reporting; New template on Budget reporting; and Proposal on permanent arrangement for the IT intern; and
- b) Directed the ROCB to seek the support of the KRA on valuation of assets contributed by KRA and a report be submitted by June 2021 – [A request was submitted to Kenya in this regard and the Valuation of assets is being finalized.](#)

Decision 7

The Governing Council:

- a) Acknowledged the update from Kenya on progress made regarding the implementation of the Forensic Audit recommendations;
- b) Directed the FGC to start the process of re-engineering the ROCB financial processes and update the Governing Council accordingly – [There are new two Members of the FGC \(Burundi and Ethiopia\) joining Madagascar and Zambia. Burundi was elected as chair of the FGC during their just ended FGC meeting with Ethiopia their deputy. The committee has embarked on the reengineering process envisioned by the GC.](#)

ESA STRATEGY

The ESA Regional Strategy (2018-2021) was operationalized upon approval by the 23rd Governing Council meeting in Kigali, Rwanda in 2018. The Strategic Plan ended in May 2021. The 27th Governing Council, at their meeting in May 2021, directed the Management Committee to establish a Strategy Working Group to develop the new ESA Strategy.

The Management committee implemented the Governing Council directive to establish a Virtual Strategy Working Group (VSWG) that is spearheading the development of the new ESA Regional Strategy (2022-25). The new strategy will focus on the following key areas/objectives: Trade Facilitation & Integration; Efficient Revenue Mobilization & Customs Modernization; Security, Enforcement & Compliance; and Professionalism & Partnerships. Digitization and data management integrated into all the areas of strategic focus. The first draft was completed in Mid-March and sent to Members for their views and input before finalizing by the Working Group. This will be further circulated to the Directors' General for their perusal before adoption at the 28th Governing Council in May 2022.

The ROCB further supported the WCO in organizing for its second regional consultation on the Strategic Plan with the ESA region, and further participated actively during this engagement. The consultations were held on 22nd and 23rd September 2021. The session was jointly chaired by the Vice-Chair for the ESA region, Mr. Jephath Mujuru and the WCO Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Ricardo Treviño Chapa. Participants held very active discussions on what the next Strategic Plan should look like and on its main focus areas. They reiterated the importance of Customs' core functions, and especially Customs' role in revenue mobilization. Participants stressed that Customs' core functions would have to evolve with global trends, moving towards greater automation. It was therefore appropriate to develop a new Strategic Plan that would equip Customs with the right tools and the right skills to perform their core functions in the "new normal". These consultations will define the new WCO Strategic Plan, following the same approach as for the previous strategy and Environmental Scan.

PROMOTING OF GROWTH IN INTRA- REGIONAL TRADE

The *Promote Growth in Intra-Regional Trade* strategic objective seeks to enhance and foster the opportunities for increased intra-regional trade amongst ESA member countries. The activities under the strategic objective are at different levels of implementation. The activities include, encouraging and supporting Members' accession to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA), supporting Members to implement TFA, educating and establishing cooperation frameworks of informal cross-border traders, adopting roadmap for regional transit management systems, establishing cooperation framework with RECs and private sector and promotion of cooperation between Customs and Tax services.

Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC): 16 out of 24 ESA members have acceded to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC). Burundi, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania are yet to accede to the RKC. Comoros acceded to the RKC on 09-03-2022.

List of contracting Members to the RKC

No.	COUNTRY	DATE OF RATIFICATION
1.	Angola	23.02.2017
2.	Botswana	26.06.2006
3.	Burundi	In process of accession
4.	Comoros	09.03.2022
5.	Djibouti	In process of accession
6.	Eritrea	In process of accession
7.	Ethiopia	In process of accession
8.	Eswatini	31.10.2012
9.	Kenya	25.06.2009
10.	Lesotho	15.06.2000
11.	Madagascar	27.06.2007

12.	Malawi	06.09.2013
13.	Mauritius	24.09.2008
14.	Mozambique	11.07.2012
15.	Namibia	03.02.2006
16.	Rwanda	21.11.2011
17.	Seychelles	In process of accession
18.	Somalia	In process of accession
19.	South Africa	18.05.2004
20.	South Sudan	In process of accession
21.	Tanzania	In process of accession
22.	Uganda	27.06.2002
23.	Zambia	01.07.2013
24.	Zimbabwe	10.02.2003

Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA): As at April 2022, 154/164 WTO members ratified the TFA, marking 94%. 19 out of 24 Members have ratified the TFA with Tanzania the latest.

Ratifiers: Botswana, Djibouti, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Eswatini, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Burundi and Tanzania.

Missing: Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan

No.	COUNTRY	DATE OF RATIFICATION
1.	Angola	09.04.2019
2.	Botswana	18.06.2015
3.	Burundi	12.12.2019
4.	Comoros	In process of ratification
5.	Djibouti	05.03.2018
6.	Eritrea	In process of ratification
7.	Ethiopia	In process of ratification
8.	Eswatini	21.11.2016
9.	Kenya	10.12.2015
10.	Lesotho	04.01.2016
11.	Madagascar	20.06.2016
12.	Malawi	12.07.2017
13.	Mauritius	05.03.2015
14.	Mozambique	06.01.2017
15.	Namibia	09.02.2018
16.	Rwanda	22.02.2017
17.	Seychelles	11.01.2016
18.	Somalia	In process of ratification
19.	South Africa	30.11.2017

20.	South Sudan	In process of ratification
21.	Tanzania	08.04.2020
22.	Uganda	27.06.2018
23.	Zambia	16.12.2015
24.	Zimbabwe	17.10.2018

AfCFTA

54 out of 55 African countries have signed the AfCFTA Agreement, with the exception of Eritrea. As at February 2022, 41 (17 from ESA) of the 54 signatories (76%) have deposited their instruments of AfCFTA ratification with the AUC Chairperson. Ghana, **Kenya**, **Rwanda**, Niger, Chad, **Eswatini**, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, **Namibia**, **South Africa**, Congo, Rep., **Djibouti**, Mauritania, **Uganda**, Senegal, Togo, Egypt, **Ethiopia**, Gambia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Rep., Sierra Leone, **Zimbabwe**, Burkina Faso, São Tomé & Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, **Mauritius**, Central African Rep., **Angola**, **Lesotho**, Tunisia, Cameroon, Nigeria, **Malawi**, **Zambia**, Algeria, **Burundi**, **Seychelles**, **Tanzania** and Cabo Verde.

Start of trading under the AfCFTA Agreement began on 1 January 2021. African countries began officially trading under a new continent-wide free trade area, after months of delays caused by the global coronavirus pandemic. The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union. It will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general. The AfCFTA is also expected to enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources.

Countries that are yet to ratify both agreements indicate that their processes are at different stages of national approval, especially parliamentary processes and cabinet approval states.

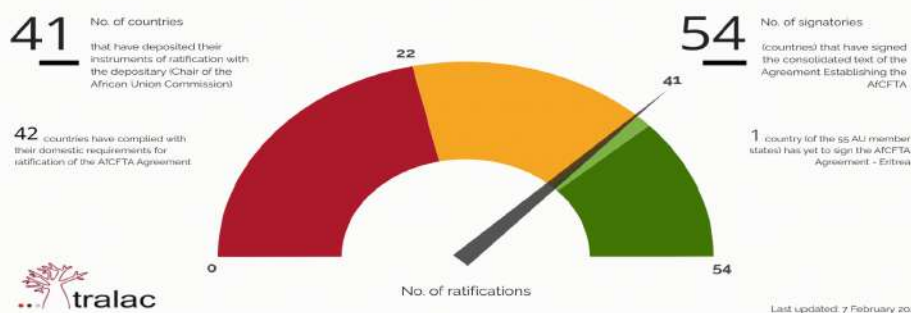
While the members are committed to implementing the agreements, the pace has been low due to a host of issues, including; challenges occasioned by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, need for further consultation and enhanced coordination among different governmental entities responsible for trade coordination, limited knowledge and information availed on the agreements, among others.

The African Continental Free Trade Area

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019 for the 24 countries that had deposited their instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson. This date marked 30 days after the 22nd instrument of ratification was deposited, as stipulated in Article 23 of the AfCFTA Agreement.

The operational phase of the AfCFTA Agreement was officially launched on 7 July 2019. In line with a Decision and Declaration adopted during the 13th Extraordinary Summit of the Assembly of the Union on 5 December 2020, start of trading under the AfCFTA regime began on 1 January 2021 under an 'interim arrangement'. To date, however, no trade has taken place under the AfCFTA.

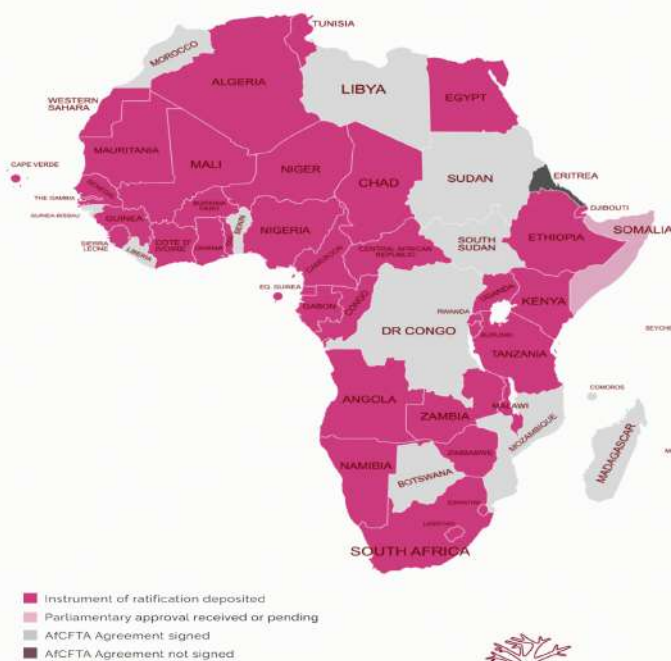
AfCFTA Ratification Barometer



Number of ratifications deposited



Which countries have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement?



Listed by date on which the AfCFTA instrument of ratification was deposited with the AUC Chairperson

Country	Date
Ghana	10/05/2018
Kenya	10/05/2018
Rwanda	26/05/2018
Niger	19/06/2018
Chad	02/07/2018
Eswatini	02/07/2018
Guinea	16/10/2018
Côte d'Ivoire	23/11/2018
Mali	01/02/2019
Namibia	01/02/2019
South Africa	10/02/2019
Congo. Rep.	10/02/2019
Djibouti	11/02/2019
Mauritania	11/02/2019
Uganda	09/02/2019
Senegal	02/04/2019
Togo	02/04/2019
Egypt	08/04/2019
Ethiopia	10/04/2019
Gambia	15/04/2019
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Rep.	30/04/2019
Sierra Leone	30/04/2019
Zimbabwe	24/05/2019
Burkina Faso	29/05/2019
São Tomé & Príncipe	27/06/2019
Equatorial Guinea	02/07/2019
Gabon	07/07/2019
Mauritius	07/10/2019
Somalia*	14/08/2020
Central African Rep.	22/09/2020
Angola	04/11/2020
Lesotho	27/11/2020
Tunisia	27/11/2020
Cameroon	01/12/2020
Nigeria	05/12/2020
Malawi	15/01/2021
Zambia	05/02/2021
Algeria	23/06/2021
Burundi	26/08/2021
Seychelles	15/09/2021
Tanzania	17/01/2022
Cabo Verde	05/02/2022

* Confirmation of approval pending.



The 10th WCO-ESA-RPSG Webinar – “AfCFTA: Implementation and progress to date”

The 10th WCO-ESA-RPSG Webinar – “AfCFTA: Implementation and progress to date” – was held on 10 June 2021 and aimed to encourage a more comprehensive discussion around the AfCFTA. The webinar was chaired by Dr. Juanita Maree and joined by seven leading customs panelists from the respective RECs in Africa: Demitta Gyang - AfCFTA Secretariat; Dhunraj Kassee – AUC; Balness Sumani – COMESA; Stephen Analo – EAC; Maggie Tladi – SACU; Alcides Monteiro – SADC; and Larry Liza – WCO ESA ROCB

The webinar marked the first time that all the respective RECs were present on one call, which shows the interest in the AfCFTA to work towards a more integrated Africa in terms of trade. The biggest trade agreement in history, covering a combined GDP of US\$2.5 and could increase intra-African trade by up to 52.3%, showing the immense potential.

However, after a relatively slow start thus far, trading under the AfCFTA must be accelerated – again highlighted throughout the discussions. Indeed, acceleration will aid the long-term objective of the AfCFTA, which is “*boosting intra-African trade, integration, and development by creating an integrated market for goods, services, promoting the cross-border movement of capital and persons*”.

From the perspective of the AUC, several critical reflections were directed to the private sector in the region:

- Is the private sector sufficiently conversant with the AfCFTA?
- How much is the private sector involved in the implementation of the AfCFTA?
- Is the private sector adequately represented in the Institutional Mechanism responsible for implementing the AfCFTA at the Continental and National levels?
- Is the private sector adequately capacitated in terms of tools, expertise, knowledge, and experience?
- Is the private sector ready to take a long drive?

Collectively, the WCO ESA RPSG is eager to see how trading under the AfCFTA unfolds.

More information: <https://www.wcoesarpsg.org/category/webinars/>



PROMOTING FAIR AND EFFICIENT REVENUE MOBILIZATION

Economic growth and development among ESA Member relies significantly on government revenue mobilization. There is need to implement modernized revenue collection methods, processes and procedures taking into account the need to ensure transparency and fairness in the process.

HS Implementation in ESA

The regional needs assessment/survey done by the ROCB (in support of the WCO too) identified the Migration to HS 2022 as a key regional need. Within the scope of the WCO EU HS program as a donor, several countries were notified about the program willingness to support them. The ROCB has further carried out a survey on the status of HS 2022 Implementation in the region and a report submitted to the region in this regard. The WCO will support a regional workshop on HS 2022 amendments to be held in Ethiopia in mid May 2022.

Enhancing Border Management in East and Southern African Region amidst COVID-19 pandemic.

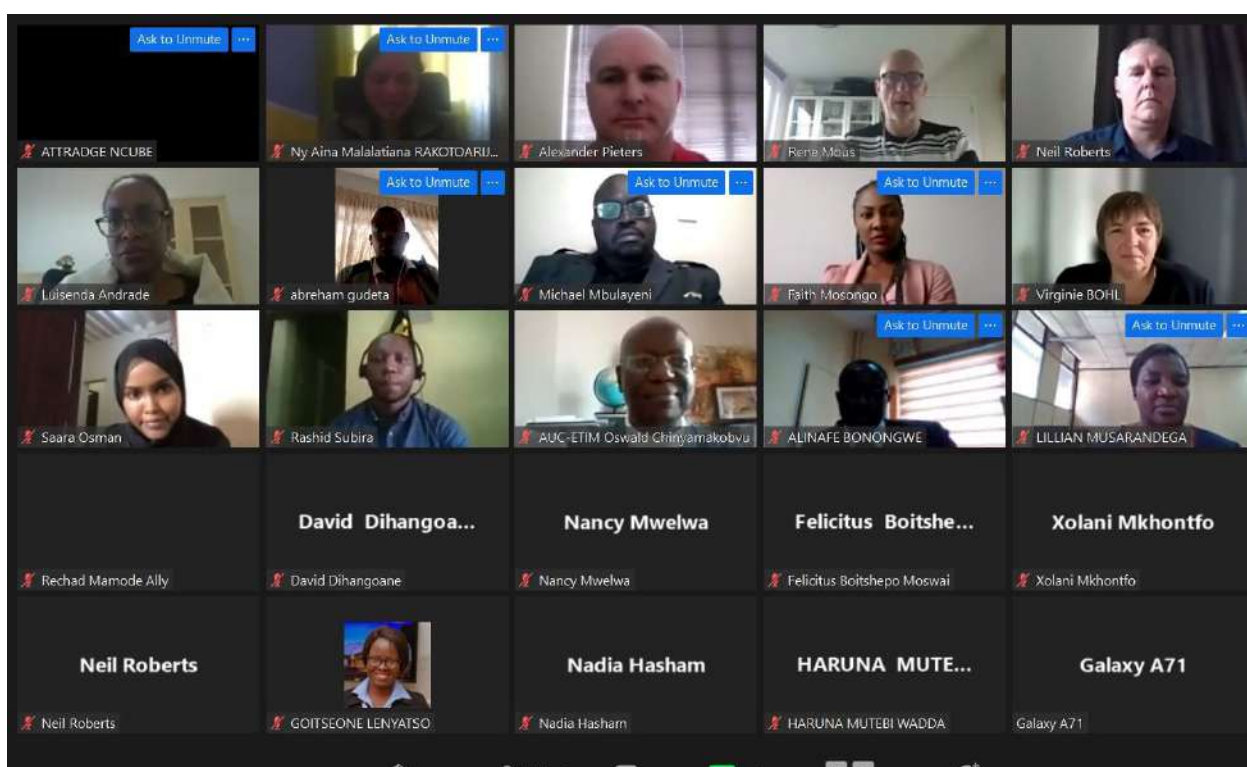
The African Union Commission –ACBC (IOM) - WCO ESA ROCB workshop on Enhancing Border Management in East and Southern African Region Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was held virtually on 21st and 22nd October 2021 via the Zoom platform. It was attended by participants from 15 ESA Countries; Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Representatives of UN, IMPACCT Working Group, MSF, Save the Children, Global Maritime Legal Solutions, WCO ESA ROCB and the AUC were also present in the meeting.

In his opening remarks, the Senior Policy Officer, Customs Cooperation of the Department of Economic Development Trade Industry and Mining, African Union Commission, Mr Dhunraj Kasee, expressed his appreciation for the joint workshop between the WCO ESA ROCB and the African Capacity Building Centre of International Office of Migration on the theme “Enhancing Border Management in East and Southern Africa Amidst COVID 19 Pandemic”. He added that, the world economy in general and Africa economy in particular will be impacted by the COVID-19. Intra-African-Trade, which according to data from the International Trade Centre was estimated at US\$105 billion in 2019 is also expected to be affected whilst the COVID-19 and its subsequent impact will last. He further stated that notwithstanding of the fact that the African economy may have been less affected by the virus in terms of people

infected and related deaths compared to other regions such as Asia, America and Europe, it's an undisputable fact that the region is noticeably affected economically due to a number of reasons such as disruptions in the global supply chains, a decline of remittances flows, tourism and FDI flows. In conclusion he specified the main objectives of the workshop including sensitizing participants on the impact and implications of the Pandemic; discussing the various challenges and sharing of best practices and experiences.

Mr. Martens Jonathan, of the African Capacity Building Centre of International Office of Migration, thanked the AUC and the WCO ESA ROCB for the collaboration on the joint workshop that will go a long way in supporting Members to enhance border management in East and Southern Africa region amidst the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. He informed the meeting that the ACBC (IOM) provides expertise and capacity building in the following areas; Border and migration management assessments; Integrated Border Management; Immigration training curriculum development; One-Stop Border Posts; Border Management Information Systems: MIDAS (Migration Information and Data Analysis System), formerly known as PIRS (Personal Identification and Registration System); Identity Management; Security and counter-terrorism; Interview and investigation techniques; Counter trafficking and smuggling of migrants. Mr. Martens encouraged the participants to contribute actively and share their experiences and best practices during the workshop.

Mr. Larry Liza, the Director of the WCO ESA ROCB, appreciated the African Union Commission and the African Capacity Building Centre of International Office of Migration for bringing the pilot programme on training Members to enhance border management amidst the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic to the East and Southern Africa region. He pointed out that the AUC has consistently supported various capacity building activities in the Region as well as invited the ROCB to all its meetings. He further highlighted the objective and expected outcomes of the workshop and urged participants to contribute actively to the discussions so as to have concrete outcomes that will be shared with the Directors General of the region for adoption.



STRENGTHENING INTRA-REGIONAL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

This objective aims to reinforce the efficiency and effectiveness in upholding compliance to Customs law, regulations and procedures in the region, and creating the enforcement mechanisms to strengthen regional security, protection of society to enable economic growth and development. This shall incorporate strategies to enhance regional trader compliance programmes and development of frameworks for customs-to-customs networking on information exchange, intelligence sharing and treatment of common and emerging risks.

RTC Mauritius and the ROCB carried out a survey during the reporting period aimed at establishing regional needs in Compliance and Enforcement. The report will be shared with Members once its finalized.

In view of supporting the WCO STOP II Operation, the RTC Mauritius in collaboration with IPvocate Africa Legal Advisers Ltd, and the ROCB, conducted a training on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The training covered: Introduction to Intellectual Property Rights, IP Enforcement in Africa – Challenges, Tips & Tricks, and Focused Targeting and Profiling. The aim of the training was to assist frontline Customs Officers in enhancing their skills on new techniques of profiling and targeting of high risks consignment for control purposes including documentary and physical inspection.

Fight against counterfeiting and piracy – SGS France, Crop Life & Syngenta

SGS, the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company in cooperation with the WCO ESA ROCB conducted an operational seminar to build enforcement capacity and improve coordination in combatting illicit trade and in particular, counterfeit and illegal pesticides that was aimed at building capacity among Kenya's Customs officials. The seminar was carried out from 31st March - 7th April 2022. The ROCB is exploring the possibility of extending this to the rest of the region.

The main output of the seminar as follows:

- i. To quantify and qualify the level of illicit trade regarding our specific products: Pesticides, Insecticides.
- ii. To detect new fraud vectors.
- iii. To identify new fraud techniques, fraud organizations, illegal supply chain to enable adaptable means of combating the problem.
- iv. To enhance collaboration between national agencies (Regulator, standardization bodies, inspectors of Ministry of Health, police, customs, as well as the communication between LEA's in the Sub-Region.

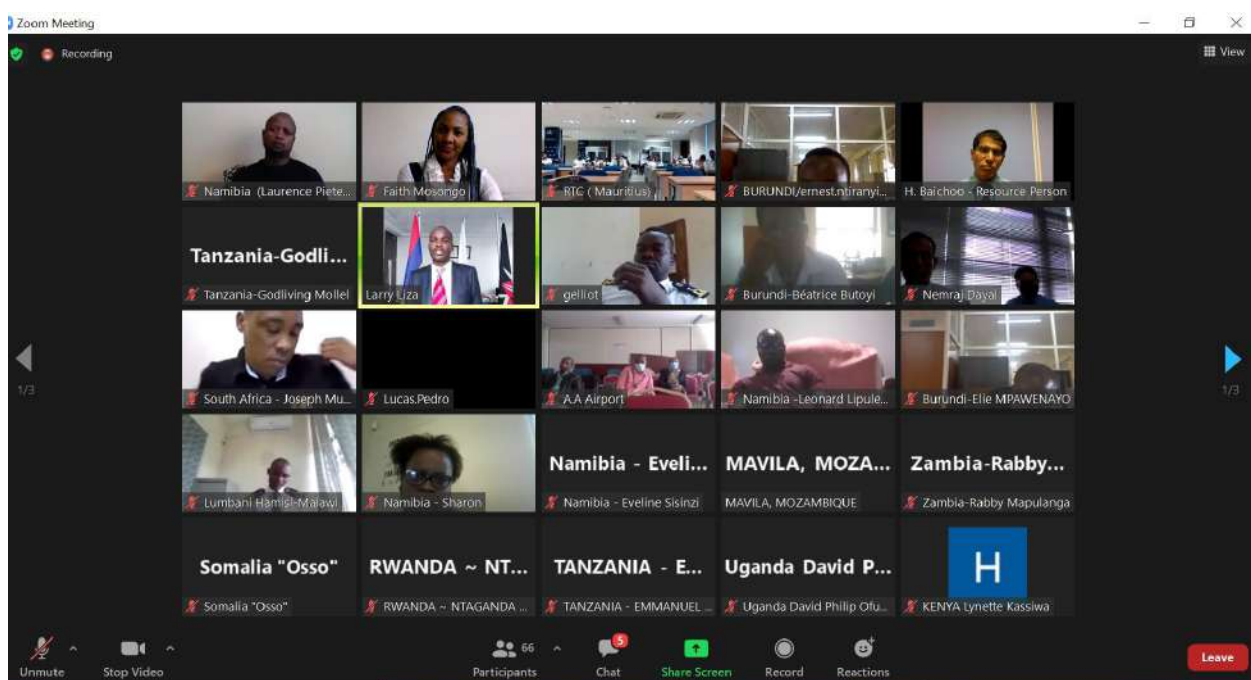


In the same vein the ROCB in conjunction with RTC Mauritius offered the region a Regional Virtual Training on Brand Identification of Medicine and Medicinal Devices and Focused Targeting Confirmation.

The ROCB has further collaborated with RTC Kenya to offer the region various trainings focussing on Rules of Origin and coordinated Border Management

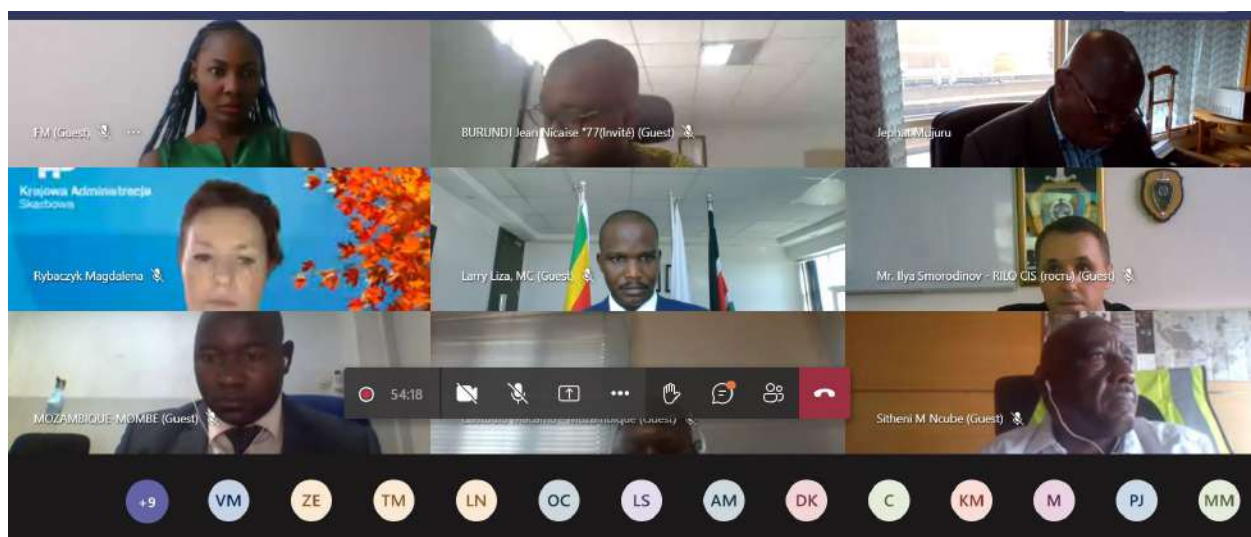
Training on Identification of New Psychoactive Substances & Profiling Techniques

RTC Mauritius and the ROCB carried out a training on identification of new Psychoactive Substances & Profiling Techniques. The training covered: Identification of New Psycho-Active Substances; Drug Intelligence Profiling; Profiling Techniques of Passengers; Profiling Techniques of Cargo and Courier; Examination of Passenger Luggage; Interrogation Techniques & Examination of Luggage (Body Search). Seventy (70) participants enrolled for the programme from 14 countries namely Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. 52 staff enrolled for the training course from MRA. Therefore, bringing the total number of participants to 112.



The 18th RILO NCP Meeting

The ROCB attended the 18th RILO NCP Meeting, held on 28th October 2021. The meeting deliberated on the outcomes of the 17th Administrative Meeting held in virtually in October 2020; RILO ESA Annual Reports (ESA, ECE & WE); Country Reports; HMRC Presentation, TWIX Presentation; Review of the nCEN/CEN Questionnaire; and presentation on Indian Ocean Navigate Easy (iONE) Platform.



ENHANCING INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM IN HUMAN CAPITAL

This objective seeks to enhance integrity, professionalism and human capital development in Member customs administrations through the development of subject matter experts, promotion of gender equality and diversity and enhancing research initiatives.

Semi-Regional Middle Management Development (MMD) Train-the-Trainer Pilot Workshop - 25 April to 6 May 2022 in Mombasa, Kenya.

The World Customs Organization (WCO), in cooperation with the WCO ESA ROCB, and under the WCO-ESA Project II funded by the Finnish Government, organized a Semi-Regional Middle Management Development (MMD) Train-the-Trainer Pilot Workshop from 25th April to 6th May 2022 in Mombasa, Kenya. The WCO LMD Programme aims to support committed WCO Member administrations in developing and implementing modern, consistent and sustainable leadership and management.

The third core element of the LMD Programme, the Middle Management Development (MMD), is new and addresses middle managers of Customs administrations by expanding their knowledge and understanding of modern management, by developing in them the appropriate behaviour and attitude of a modern manager and by equipping them with a set of fundamental skills necessary to manage themselves, teams, stakeholders and the organizational strategy and culture on a daily basis. After finalizing the MMD training package, it was decided to deliver a pilot MMD Train the-Trainer workshop in the ESA Region targeted at trainers of Middle Managers, to support the implementation of the MMD training programme at national and regional levels.

The 3rd ESA Regional Research Conference

The 3rd WCO ESA Regional Research Conference was held virtually due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and took place on the 23rd and 24th November 2021. It was co-organized by the ROCB and RTC Mauritius with the support of RTC Kenya and the WCO ESA Project II funded by the Government of Finland.

The conference was attended by more than 100 participants from across the world. Participants included researchers and officials from various member customs administrations in the East and Southern Africa Region, WCO ESA Regional Training Centres (RTCs), the WCO, the African Union, the private sector, academia, and other cooperating partners. The conference was also graced by the presence of a very high level delegation including: the WCO ESA ROCB Director, Mr. Larry Liza; the WCO ESA Vice Chair; Mr. Adrian P. Swarres,

Zimbabwe; the World Customs Organization Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya; and the guest of honour, Director General, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Mr. Sudhamo Lal. The Minister of Finance, Comoros the Honourable Souef Kamalidini; and the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail & Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius, the Honourable Alan Ganoo also attended the conference.

The theme of the conference was **“The effect of emerging issues on the role of Customs and Trade”** covering: Cross-border e-commerce: Enhancing trade facilitation and impact of cross-border e-commerce on Customs and international trade in East and Southern Africa; Effects of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Trade Facilitation Agreement in East and Southern Africa; Security and development: Challenges and opportunities presented by technologies and emergence of new trade practices and their potential effects on security; Gender Equity, Equality and Diversity: Highlighting opportunities presented in the integration of gender practices and promotion of diversity in Customs and Trade in East and Southern Africa; and Compliance and Enforcement: Essential tools in enhancing revenue collection, safety and security.



3rd WCO ESA Regional Customs Research Conference

Theme
‘The effect of emerging issues on the role of Customs and Trade’.
 23rd - 24th November 2021

Key Note Speakers

			
Larry Liza Director: World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building.	Adrian Peter Swarres Acting Commissioner Customs and Excise with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority	Dr. Kunio Mikuriya Secretary General of the World Customs Organization (WCO)	Mr M. Sudhamo Lal, Csk Director General, Mauritius Revenue Authority

Gender Equity, Equality and Diversity

The just ended Strategy and Implementation Plan 2018-2021 of the East and Southern Africa (ESA) Region highlighted priority areas to be implemented. The Scope of application for this Strategy was on deepening regional integration through trade facilitation, revenue collection, protection of the society, enhancing human capital development and integrity. There was therefore a specific operational objective on promoting Gender Equality and Diversity (GED). This has a priority area of developing policies that address GED.

It will be appreciated that there is, thus, a need to strengthen the intra-region GED Strategy by developing and operationalising the GED Module for the ESA Region. As such, Customs Administrations are encouraged to draft and publish GED Policies taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the help of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) dedicated tools, they shall also be required to align Customs Policies and Practices with National Legal Frameworks and Regional / International Commitments on GED. The aim is to enhance the capacities of Customs Administrations to effectively design and manage GED reforms and modernization initiatives which will enable them to respond to emerging GED needs, demands and opportunities.

As part of WCO ESA Strategy 2018-2021 on promoting Gender Equality and Diversity, the Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) in conjunction with the Virtual Working Group on Gender Equality and Diversity was tasked to develop a GED Module that provides a reference to review existing GED Policies, Strategies and Procedures with the following four (4) deliverables:

- Equip ESA Customs Administration with an adapted set of tools to effectively complement the WCO Toolbox on GED
- Develop a Regional Module on GED
- Encourage Members to draft and publish GED Policies taking into account the SDGs
- Conducting an annual GED Conference

The regional module on GED has since been developed and will be presented for adoption officially by the 28th Governing Council. It will also be noted that the GED Framework will now be renamed to the Gender Inclusivity and Diversity (GID) Framework. The GED Working Group was chaired by Mr. Paul Stephen Ojambo, Uganda, and deputized by Botswana and Malawi. The ROCB is currently sourcing for funding to support a GED conference.

Risk Management in ESA

As part of the WCO ESA Strategy 2018-2021 to strengthen intra-regional compliance and enforcement, the ROCB in conjunction with the Risk Management Virtual Working Group was tasked, at the regional level, to develop a risk management model plan that provides a reference to review existing risk management policies, strategies and procedures with the following four (4) deliverables:

- Virtual Working Group (VWG) to collate existing Regional Risk Management Plans;
- Development of a Regional Risk Management Framework;
- Approval of a Regional Compliance Manual; and
- Conducting a RM Compendium Workshop.

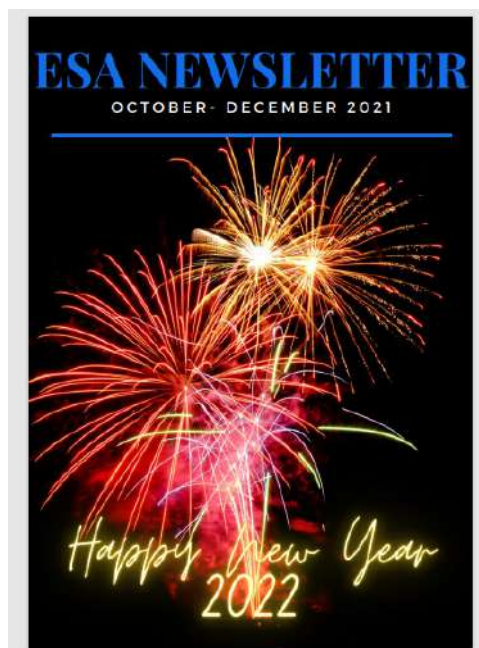
The purpose of the WCO ESA Customs risk management policy sets out the governance structure to provide a supportive risk management framework in Customs Administrations in the region and ensure that risks are managed effectively and escalated to be in line with the objective of to streamline the Customs Risk Management Process in the Region. This policy is a model policy with a dynamic approach to the management of all risks. This policy has been finalized and largely expresses the risk management philosophy and commitment to an integrated and comprehensive approach to ERM, whilst implementing Customs Risk Management.

Rules of Origin Refresher Course for EAC Customs Officers

The ROCB continues to collaborate with all regional entities towards the successful implementation of the current Regional Strategic plan. In this regard, the ROCB supported RTC Kenya in the roll out of international Customs trainings in line with its mandate to develop regionally relevant trainings while giving priority to trainings that relate to the Economic Competitive Package. To this effect, RTC Kenya with the support of the ROCB offered a Rules of Origin Refresher training for East Africa Community Customs Officers on 6th and 7th September 2021.

Newsletter Publication

The ROCB aims to publish eNewsletters quarterly and urges Members and stakeholders to submit their articles to the ROCB on a rolling basis. During the reporting period four newsletters were published and shared with the region and the global Customs family.



REPORT OF THE REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE LIAISON OFFICE (RILO) 2021/22

1.0 CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT NETWORK (CEN) MANAGEMENT

1.1 CEN Usage

Eight (8) out of 19-member states recorded seizures in CEN during the Year representing a yearly of 42.11%. There was no change in the percentage usage as the same number of countries uploaded seizures in the previous year.

The number of entries uploaded onto the CEN system declined from 1, 599 entries last year to 1, 397 entries this year (a 10.13% percentage decline). Only four (4) Member States recorded more than 50 Entries for the period under review. The highest user still remains South Africa with 1, 027 entries for the year followed by Zimbabwe with 69 entries.

1.2 Seizures by country

Validated cases

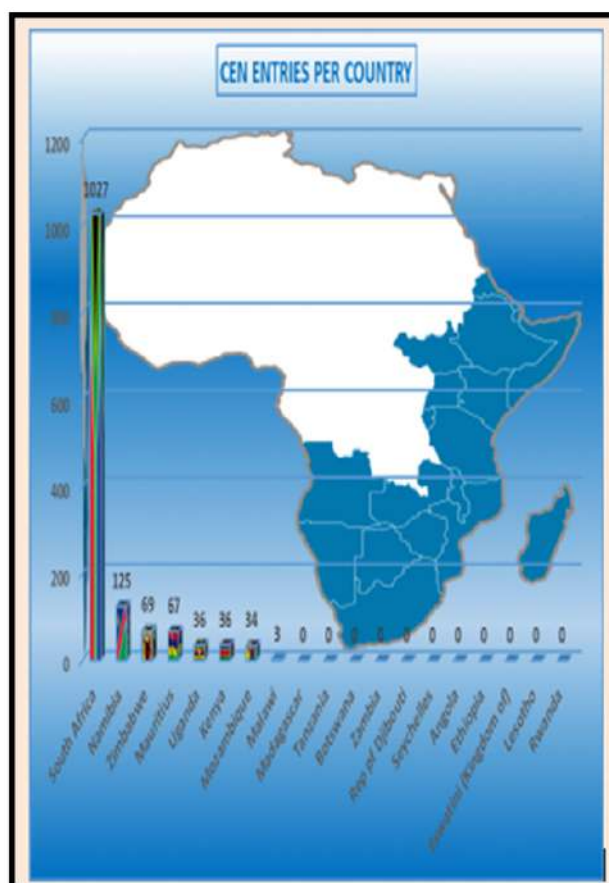
Comments

- South Africa recorded the highest number of Seizures with 1, 027 cases uploaded onto the CEN system. The figure represents 74% of the total entries made for the year.
- Namibia was the second highest contributor to the system with 125 cases followed by Zimbabwe with 69 cases.
- Zimbabwe made the biggest jump with 69 cases from no contribution at all in the previous year.
- Eleven countries did not upload any entries for the whole year (01/04/2021 up to 31/03/2022).

Country	Cases	% of Total
South Africa	1027	74%
Namibia	125	9%
Zimbabwe	69	5%
Mauritius	67	5%
Uganda	36	3%
Kenya	36	3%
Mozambique	34	2%
Malawi	3	0%
Madagascar	0	0%
Tanzania	0	0%
Botswana	0	0%
Zambia	0	0%
Rep of Djibouti	0	0%
Seychelles	0	0%
Angola	0	0%
Ethiopia	0	0%
Aswatini (Rep of)	0	0%
Lesotho	0	0%
Rwanda	0	0%
Total	1397	100%

Comments

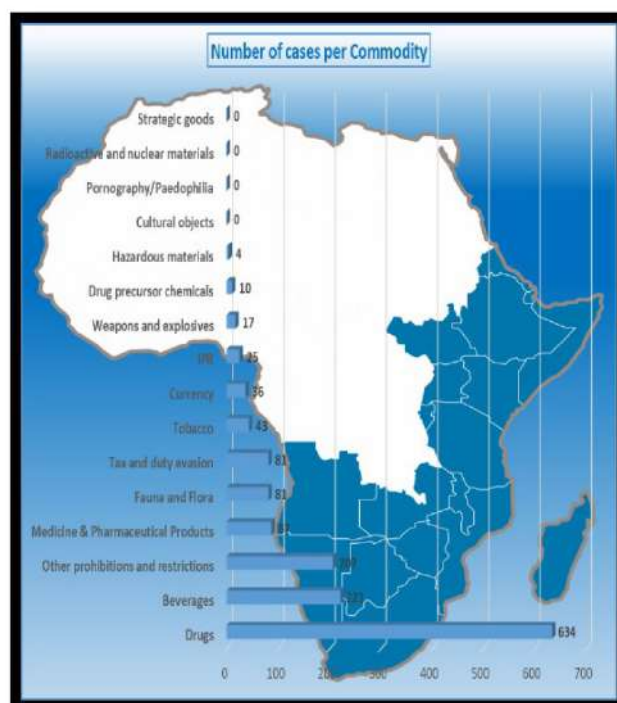
Nine (9) member states failed to upload a single case onto the CEN system. These member states are Angola, Botswana, Eswatini (Kingdom of), Ethiopia, Lesotho, Rwanda, Republic of Djibouti, Seychelles and Zambia.



1.3 Seizures by Commodity

The total number of entries per commodity was 1, 446 for the year.

- Drugs topped the list with 634 seizures (43.85% of total commodities seized). The figure represented an increase in drug cases from last year where 587 cases were recorded.
- Beverages and Other Prohibitions & Restrictions ranked second and third on the list with 221 and 207 cases respectively.
- Again, no cases were uploaded for strategic goods, radioactive & nuclear materials and Pornography/Paedophilia.



1.4 Year on year comparison (2020/21 – 2021/22)

Comments

- Total cases per commodity fell by 12.47% from the previous year.
- The greatest decline was recorded for Tobacco with 87.05% decrease, from 332 entries recorded last year to and only 43 entries this year.
- The greatest increase was for Weapons and explosives with 325% (4 cases to 10 cases) followed by 165% for Other Prohibitions & Restrictions (207 cases up from 78 cases the previous year).
- Tobacco declined from being the commodity with the third highest cases in the previous year to number seven on the list this year.

Commodity	Number of Cases		Variance	
	2022	2021	Actual	as a %
Drugs	634	587	47	8.0%
Beverages	221	336	-115	-34.2%
Other Prohibitions & Restrictions	207	78	129	165.4%
Medicines & Pharmaceutical Products	87	62	25	40.3%
Tax & Duty Evasion	81	130	-49	-37.7%
Tobacco	43	332	-289	-87.0%
Currency	36	16	20	125.0%
IPR	25	34	-9	-26.5%
Weapons & Explosives	17	4	13	325.0%
Drug Precursor				
Chemicals	10	4	6	150.0%
Hazardous Materials	4	8	-4	-50.0%
Cultural Objects	0	0	0	0.0%
Pornography / Paedophilia	0	0	0	0.0%
Radioactive & Nuclear				
Materials	0	0	0	0.0%
Strategic Goods	0	0	0	0.0%
Totals	1365	1591		

1.5 Value of the Contraband

Comments

- The total value of contraband seized during the year was USD129, 804, 041.00 down from USD353 396 156.00 the previous year.
- Top of the list were Other Prohibitions and Restrictions with USD88, 393, 382.00 worth of goods seized (68.1% of all seized items).
- Only four commodities had more than USD1million worth of goods seized.

Commodity	Value	% of Total
Other Prohibitions & Restrictions	US\$88,393,382	68.1%
Drugs	US\$22,832,864	17.6%
Drug Precursor		
Chemicals	US\$10,761,561	8.3%
Medicines & Pharmaceutical Products	US\$6,264,705	4.8%
IPR	US\$915,914	0.7%
Fauna & Flora	US\$367,661	0.3%
Currency	US\$97,462	0.1%
Tobacco	US\$59,990	0.0%
Beverages	US\$55,494	0.0%
Tax & Duty Evasion	US\$55,008	0.0%
Weapons & Explosives	US\$0.00	0.0%
Hazardous Materials	US\$0.00	0.0%
Cultural Objects	US\$0.00	0.0%
Pornography / Paedophilia	US\$0.00	0.0%
Radioactive & Nuclear		
Materials	US\$0.00	0.0%
Strategic Goods	US\$0.00	0.0%
	US\$129,804,041	100.0%

1.6 Significant Seizures (Per commodity)

1.6.1 Drugs

Drugs worth a total of USD22, 832, 864.00 were seized during the year. The tree biggest entries into the CEN system were:



- a) 19kgs Crystal Meth plus 136kgs Heroin worth USD2, 168, 504.00 that was seized at **Komatipoort Land Border** in RSA on 11/05/2021.
- b) 80kg Crystal Meth valued at USD1 679 298.00 that was seized at **Johannesburg Airport**, RSA on 09/06/2021.
- c) 22 Kgs Crystal Meth valued at USD437 048.00 that was seized at **Johannesburg Airport** on 29/01/2022.



1.6.2 Medicine and Pharmaceutical Products

The total value of seized medicine and pharmaceutical products for the year 2021/22 was USD6 264 705.00. The top three seizures were:

- a) 451 600 pieces of sexual enhancement pills and creams valued at USD3 164 077.00 that were seized at Johannesburg Airport on 09/06/2021.
- b) 373 528 pieces' sexual enhancement tablets valued at USD2 548 686.00 seized at Johannesburg Airport on 24/06/2021.
- c) 41 600 pieces of erectile dysfunctional tablets valued at USD273 416.00 seized at Johannesburg the mail centre on 15/02/2022.



1.6.3 Drug Precursors

Drug precursors seized during the year were worth USD10 761 561.00 for the 10 seizures made. Of the 10 seizures cases the three were outstanding cases were:



- a) 1 749kgs Mixed substances valued at USD7 431 754.00 seized at Johannesburg Airport on 03/06/2021. The consignment was from Kenya and destined for RSA. The mixed substances contents tested positive to Dimethoxybenzyl piperazine 29.9%, Monoacetylmorphine 25.1% and Triethoxyamphetamine 16.2% used as a precursor in the manufacturing of Mandrax.
- b) 132Kgs Calcium Hydroxide cellulose and Rhodizoinc Acid Disodium salt valued at USD2 791 649.00 that was seized at Johannesburg Airport on 08/09/2021.
- c) 9kgs Ephedrine valued at USD171 914.00 seized at a mail centre in Johannesburg. The consignment was an export to the UK.

1.6.4 Fauna & Flora

The total value of Fauna and Flora entries uploaded onto the CEN system for the year was USD367 661.00. The three outstanding entries were:



- a) 460kgs Abalone seized at Komatipoort border on 13/10/2021. The consignment was valued at USD108 886.00.
- b) 21kgs Rhino horns worth USD154 824.00 seized at a mail centre in RSA on 15/12/2021.
- c) 7 7750 pieces of sea horses seized at a mail centre in Johannesburg, RSA on 01/06/2021.

1.6.5 Other Prohibitions and Restrictions

A total of USD88 393 382.00 worth of goods were seized. This commodity topped the list on the value of seized goods compared to all other commodities. The following were the three outstanding entries:



- a) 100 000 facemasks valued at USD73 247 510.00 seized at Johannesburg Airport on 06/07/2021.
- b) 12 730 pieces facemasks (Luis Vuitton, Gucci and Burberry) valued at USD13 283 259.00. The masks were seized at Johannesburg Airport on 12/08/2021.
- c) 268kgs of abalone from RSA to China seized on 14/07/2020. The abalone was worth USD58, 424.00

1.6.6 Tobacco

43 seizure cases were recorded for tobacco during the year under review. The total value of the seized tobacco was USD59 990.00. The three biggest entries in terms of quantities were:

- a) 1 138 200 cigarettes seized at Beitbridge Border Post in RSA on 12/10/2021.
- b) 640 000 cigarettes seized at Beitbridge Border Post in RSA on 14/10/2021.
- c) 598 000 cigarettes seized at Beitbridge Border Post in RSA on 27/10/2021.

1.6.7 Tax & Duty Evasion

USD55 494.00 worth of goods were intercepted due to tax and duty evasion.

1.6.8 Currency

An equivalent of USD97 462.00 in currencies was seized during the year. The top three amounts were:

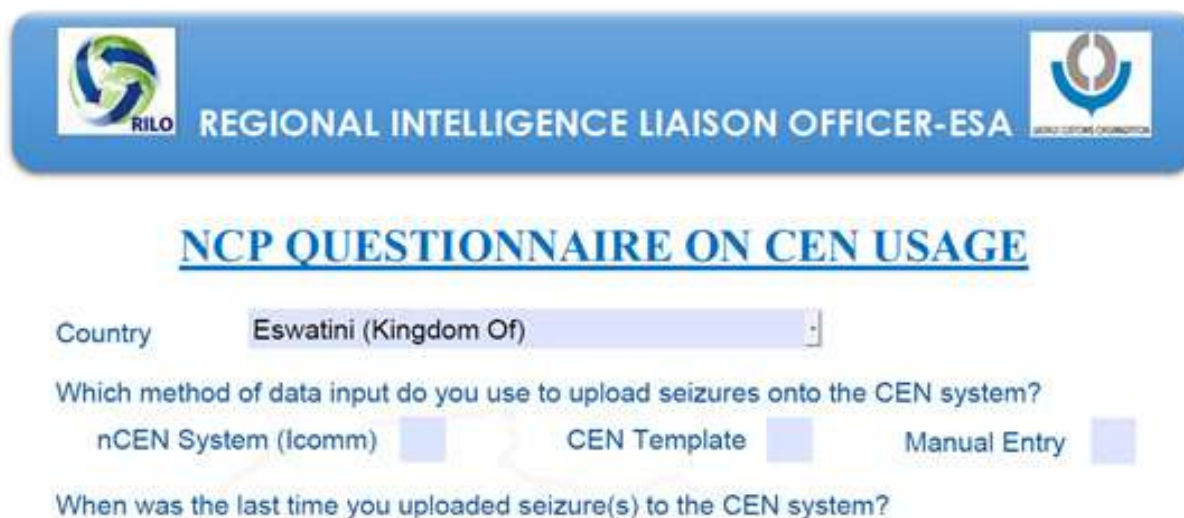
- a) A total of USD40 000.00 and EUR3000.00 seized at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport in Mauritius on 19/6/2021.
- b) USD28 000.00 seized in Kenya at a mail centre in Nairobi Kenya on 09/11/2021. The parcel was declared as clothes and books.
- c) 10 660.00EUR that was seized at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport in Mauritius on 19/6/2021. This was import into Mauritius.

1.6.9 Beverages

Beverages worth USD55 494.00 were seized during the year.

1.6.10 CEN Usage Questionnaire

A CEN system usage questionnaire was designed and distributed to all member states. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out challenges being faced in uploading seizure data onto the system, and to find out possible solutions to those problems.



Country **Eswatini (Kingdom Of)**

Which method of data input do you use to upload seizures onto the CEN system?

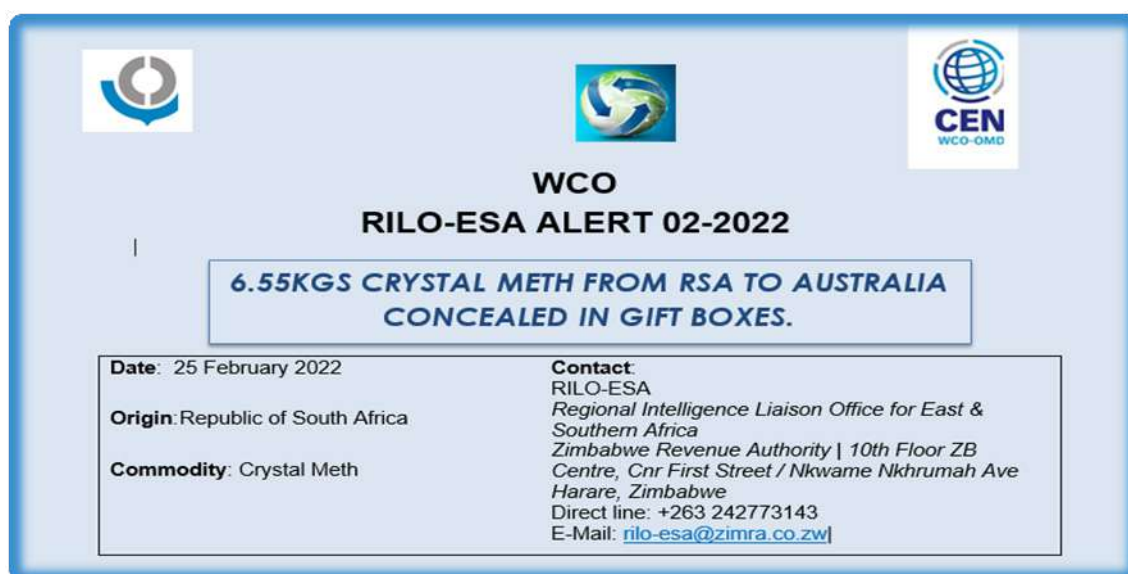
☐ nCEN System (Icomm) ☐ CEN Template ☐ Manual Entry

When was the last time you uploaded seizure(s) to the CEN system?

Only seven (7) member states managed to respond to the questionnaire and the majority of those with challenges did not respond.

2.0 INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS

- Alert Messages



Date: 25 February 2022	Contact: RILO-ESA Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for East & Southern Africa Zimbabwe Revenue Authority 10th Floor ZB Centre, Cnr First Street / Nkwame Nkhumah Ave Harare, Zimbabwe Direct line: +263 242773143 E-Mail: rilo-esa@zimra.co.zw
Origin: Republic of South Africa	
Commodity: Crystal Meth	

Drafted and distributed the following Alerts during the year.

- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 08 - 2021:** Crystal Meth concealed in the base of bowls from RSA to New Zealand.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 09 - 2021:** Heroin concealed in dress buttons from RSA to Australia.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 10 - 2021:** Dried sea horses from RSA to China.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 11 - 2021:** 136kgs heroin and 19kgs crystal meth concealed in charcoal from Mozambique to RSA.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 12 - 2021:** 80kgs heroin concealed in rolls of fabric and threads from RSA to Israel.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 13 - 2021:** 8.6kgs heroin concealed in cans of tomato puree from RSA to New Zealand.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 14 - 2021:** 11kgs heroin concealed in a pipe from RSA to Canada.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 15 - 2021:** 1kg heroin concealed in boxes of coffee from RSA to Netherlands.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 16 - 2021:** 661.45kgs of dagga and bales of three bales second hand clothes from Mozambique to Zimbabwe.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 17 - 2021:** 25 x boxes (1250 x 100mls) Broncleer cough syrup from RSA to Zimbabwe.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 18 - 2021:** 4kgs Methamphetamine declared as beauty facemasks and sanitary pads from RSA to Angola.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 19 - 2021:** 10kgs heroin concealed in cardboard packaging of hair extension pieces from RSA to the Netherlands.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 20 - 2021:** 11.6kgs crystal meth in salt scapes ph reducer 3kg pool containers.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 21 - 2021:** 21.4kgs Mdma (ecstasy) concealed in nylon reels.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 01 - 2022:** 15.6kgs heroin from RSA to Australia concealed in cosmetics (mascaras).
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 02 - 2022:** 6.55kgs crystal meth from RSA to Australia concealed in gift boxes.
- **WCO RILO-ESA Alert 03 - 2022:** 2kgs crystal meth from RSA to Australia concealed in knitting wool.

- Analysis

Drafted and circulated two (2) analyses reports during the year:

- ***Drug seizures in CEN for ESA region: March/April 2021.*** A closer look at the methods of concealment for seizures uploaded onto the CEN.
- ***Drug seizures in CEN for ESA region: May/June 2021.*** A closer look at the methods of concealment for seizures uploaded onto the CEN.

These two analyses were done for consecutive periods as a way of analyzing trends and changes in the methods used for concealment over the periods.

- Illicit Trade reports



Produced and circulated the “**RILO ESA Illicit Trade Report**” covering the period 01/10/2020 to 30/09/2021.

- RILO ESA Newsletters

Produced and circulated two half-year **RILO ESA Newsletters** covering periods:

- January to June 2021, and
- July to December 2022.

- Received and circulated to all NCPs the “Threat Assessment Information Note 2/2021”.

3.0 INFORMATION & INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE

Received and distributed several Alerts from other RILO as follows:

- 25 x RILO WE Alerts
- 10 x RILO ECE Alerts
- 4 x RILO JIO Alerts
- 2 x RILO ME
- 1 x RILO CIS

Received and circulated Infor Magazines from RILO WE and RILO ECE.



Received and shared information and alerts from member states to other RILOs and member states. Most of the alerts were from RSA, Namibia and Mozambique.

4.0 JOINT OPERATION / PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Invitations to participate in various joint operations were received and cascaded accordingly. There was an increase in the uptake and participation in the Operation Stop II by Member States in the Region. The RILO ESA office continues to encourage all Member States to keep up the good work and continue participating in such operations to enhance effectiveness in curbing smuggling in the region and beyond.

- **Operation STOP II**

Fifteen (15) members from the RILO ESA Region participated in Operation STOP II that was held between 30 April 2021 to 30 September 2021. This was the highest participation rate in an operation by member states so far. The operation was held in two phases.

The Operation STOP II report was launched on 07 December 2021, and below we look at the major points from the report related to the ESA region.



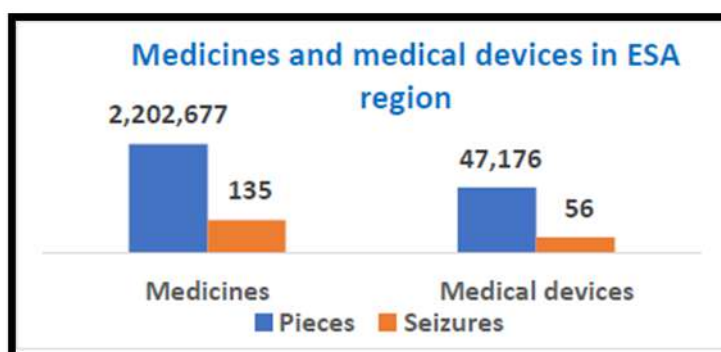
Highlights from the report:

191 seizures were made in the region and these were distributed as follows:

Country	Seizures	Pieces
Namibia	108	575735
South Africa	79	1548506
Mauritius	3	115612
Zambia	1	10000
Total	191	2249853

Namibia contributed the highest number of seizures with 108 cases followed by RSA with 79 cases and then Mauritius with 3 and Zambia with a single case. The other 11 participating countries did not report any seizure cases for the duration of the operation.

The bulk of the seizures were for medicines with 135 cases and the other 56 cases were for medical devices.



The table below shows the highlights of the products and quantities seized during the operation.

Product	Seizures	Qty
Ivermectin	13	49025
Painkillers	13	157000
Cough & Cold Medication	3	108096
Health Supplements	10	104606
Medicals devices	56	47000
Covid 19 Test Kits	28	23277
Face Masks	14	22192
Covid 19 Vaccines	2	30000

- [Operation Thunder](#)

Operation Thunder 2021, which was the fifth edition of the Operation “Thunder” series was held during the year under review on the below mentioned dates.

- Pre-operational phase - from 01 July to 30 September 2021;
- Operational phase - from 01 to 31 October 2021; and
- Post-operational phase - from 01 to 31 December 2021.

- [Operation GOALS](#)

Received and shared the Operation GOALS final report. The operation was held in February 2021.

Highlights from the report were:

From the ESA region, only two member states (RSA and Kenya) recorded seizures during the operation:

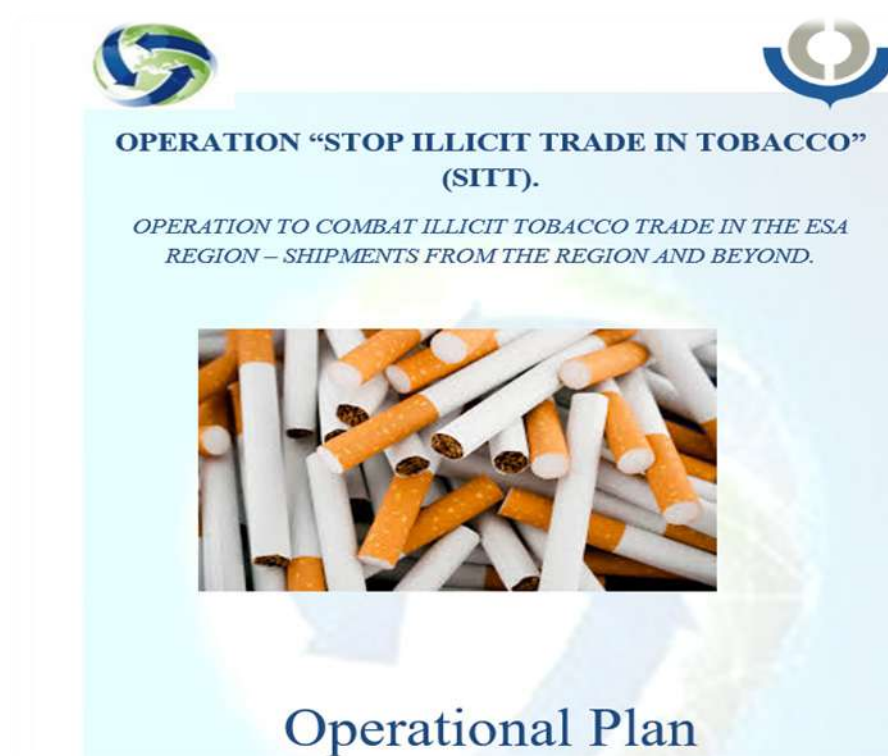
Member State	No# of Seizures	Total Quantity
South Africa	22	159.7kgs
Kenya	3	3.2kgs

Drug types and Quantity seized:

Drug Type	Q	Quantity (kgs)
Cannabis	11	72.3
Cocaine	1	30
Psy Drugs	7	26.5
Khat	6	11.4
Opioids	5	5.7
Other	1	17
Total	31	162.9

- Operation against illicit trade in tobacco: ESA Region

Drafted an Operational Plan for an operation named **“Stop Illicit Trade in Tobacco (SITT)”**. The operation is to be held during the year 2022.

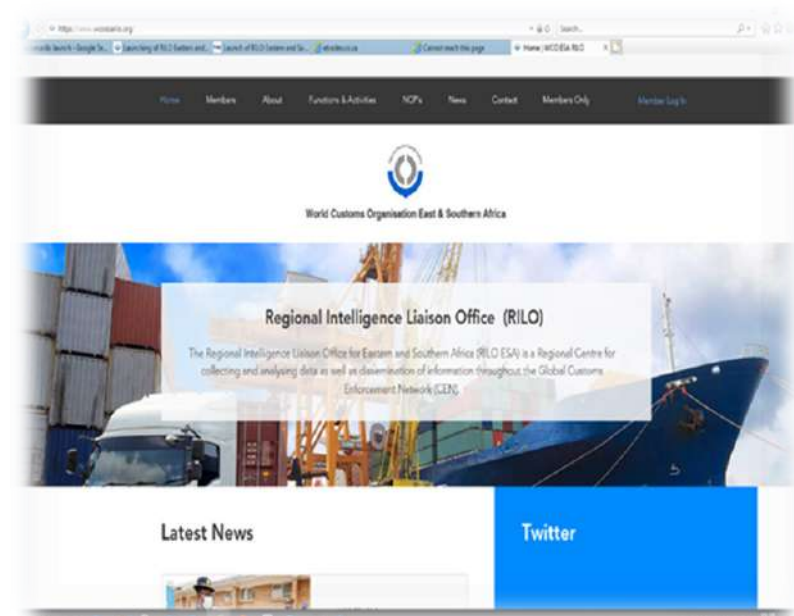


The idea to hold this operation first came about during the 17th NCP Annual Administrative meeting.

The operation's target is to combat illicit trade in tobacco in the ESA Region. Its target will be shipments from within the region and beyond.

5.0 RILO ESA WEBSITE

The RILOESA Website (www.wcoesarilo.org)



The RILO ESA website is up and running and not much activity took place during the year.

New stories were added to the site although a lot needs to be done by all member states to improve the website.

Shared the updated list of RILO ESA NCPs with the Global Trade Solution, the wcoesarilo website developers for annual renewals.

6.0 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- [18th NCP Annual Administrative Meeting](#)

The 18th Annual Administrative Meeting of the National Contact Point (NCP) for the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) was successfully held virtually on 28 October 2021.



The meeting was attended by NCPs from the ESA Region as well as other invited guests who included the WCO ESA Region Vice-Chair and Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) Acting Commissioner for Customs & Excise Mr. J. Mujuru, CEN Programme manager, ESA ROCB Director Mr. L. Laiza, representatives from RILOWE, RILO CIS and RILO ECE. Also represented at the meeting were the SADC TWIX, the WCO and some ZIMRA members of staff.

Countries represented in the meeting including, South Africa, Uganda, Mauritius, Botswana, Madagascar, Angola, Burundi, Mozambique, Eswatini (Kingdom of), Lesotho and Zimbabwe and the majority presented their country reports. Members were encouraged to upload their seizures on CEN and to be more active in the WCO Projects or operations.

Other Meetings

- [Attended the WCO Global webinar series: Improving awareness on COVID-19 Vaccines:](#)
 - a) 16 April 2021 – Presentation by Serum Institute of India,
 - b) 29 April 2021 – Presentation by Johnson and Johnson,
 - c) 13 July 2021 – Presentation by Sinopharm Group Ltd,
 - d) 18 January 2022 – Presentation by Pfizer, and
 - e) 15/02/2022 – Presentation by Novavax.
- [Operation GOALS Debrief](#)

Attended an online (KUDO) debriefing seminar of Operation GOALS that was held on 12/05/2021.

- [Operation STOP II meetings](#)

A number of Operation Stop meetings were held during the year and RILO ESA managed to attend the following sessions:

- a) Attended a Zoom Operation STOP II (Phase 2) - Regional Virtual Meeting held on 17/06/2021.
- b) Attended the virtual Report launch for Operation “STOP II” held on 07/12/2021.
- c) Held an Operation STOP II debrief meeting between the WCO STOP team and the RILO ESA team on 15/01/2022.
- d) Attended the virtual STOP II regional meeting with rilo esa for esa members held on 14/02/2022, which followed the meeting above.
- Held a Discussion on CEN Applications with the WCO CEN Programme Manager on 23/11/2021.
- Attended the SADC-TWIX webinar meeting on Guidelines for verifying timber legality for customs, held on 20/09/2021.

The Head RILO ESA also attended the following meetings:

- Head RILO ESA attended the **“WCO Online Regional Workshop on Cross Border E-Commerce for the ESA and WCA Regions”** which was held over four days from 25 to 28 May 2021.
- Head RILO ESA attended a workshop on **“Combating illicit trade in cigarettes and alcohol in Southern Africa.”**
- RTC Heads meeting that was held virtually on 09/11/2021.
- RSG meeting held on 11/11/2021.
- Attended the debriefing meeting for Operation PGS East Africa held on 05/05/2021.



7.0 LEARNING AND GROWTH

- Nothing was done due to the restrictions as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Member States encouraged to upgrade their nCEN to the latest Version. Assistance to be sought from the WCO to assist with the quick upgrade of the nCEN systems in member states.
- Member states to capture and submit their seizures for data analysis and sharing, timeously.
- Member States encouraged to utilise the WCO Tools
- Member states with training or other technical needs encouraged to notify the RILO and WCO for facilitation of assistance.
- Members who need country specific analysis done may contact the RILO ESA office.

UPDATES FROM THE REGIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR GROUP (RPSG)

In another challenging year, the ESA Regional Private Sector Group (RPSG) celebrated several vital milestones, none more so than establishing a governance structure to lead customs and trade-related matters from the perspective of the private sector in the ESA region.

In providing some background, the RPSG was formed to verify the implementation, monitoring, and assistance of various instruments in the WCO Instruments and Tools, making trade easier without comprising or imposing a higher risk profile. The group is governed by a Terms of Reference (TOR) and works under the guidance of the WCO Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG). This approach will also allow the private sector to articulate its regional integration challenges and possible solutions to the well-known obstacles. We need to manage them effectively to create a safe, fair, and compliant environment for all private sector participants in the region.

The six focus areas of the RPSG – as found on their website (<https://www.wcoesarpsg.org/>) are:

- (1) SMART Borders
- (2) AEO
- (3) Education and awareness
- (4) Research in the region
- (5) Measurements; and
- (6) Non-tariff barriers.

The RPSG informs the region through webinars and newsletters, including several global resources, which can be found on the website. Furthermore, the RPSG encourages the broader trading community in the ESA region to use them and further engage with the RPSG. Ultimately, the RPSG will continue its efforts in becoming the apex private sector organization in the ESA region!

1. Establishment of the Governance Structure:

The RPSG Governance Structure was formed when the RPSG hosted its inaugural governance meeting on 22 July after nominated members from the respective ESA member countries. Currently, the governance structure has 28 members from 17 member countries and is derived from the TOR. However, there are still some missing representatives from countries, including Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Madagascar, Seychelles, Somalia, and South Sudan. Thus,

members will again be prompted to propose any eligible member from their work streams representing these countries. This approach will allow the WCO-ESA-RPSG to express diverse and fair participation within the region. Another two online meetings were subsequently held in November and March. Planned discussions revolve around the specific focus areas and key deliverables.

The discussions throughout the Governance Meetings included the WCO Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, the linkage of the WTO-TFA, AfCFTA, WCO instruments and tools, and the situation around our land borders. For all meetings, respective members from WCO PSCG joined in to provide some international guidance. The latest included Brenda Smith, who explained the strategic plan and subsequent annual implementation plan of the WCO for 2022. The WCO aims to provide leadership in digitizing processes, green customs, and performance measurement.

For the AfCFTA specifically, many traders have voiced their concern about the lack of publicly available information. Ultimately, the success of these linkages will come from the following suggestions: digitization (electronic data exchange – noting data issues) – implementation of the AfCFTA as a digital agreement, refining risk assessment, supporting AEO programs, supporting the transitioning to HS 2022. In addition, it is crucial to recognize the institutional arrangements in the AfCFTA (Sub-committee on Trade Facilitation, Customs cooperation, and transit), the Committee of Director Generals of Customs, and the National Trade Facilitation Committees.

Lastly, the RPSG has created a task matrix to ensure that all matters discussed are followed through and monitored in due course. These include research and development, establishing a code of conduct, categorizing the leading industries in the ESA region, and ensuring that SMEs are adequately represented.

2. Webinars during the year

In the last 12 months, the RPSG held three webinars on the AfCFTA, technology and trade digitalization, and NTBs in the ESA region. The webinars have brought together excellent international speakers – stimulating meaningful discussions on customs and trade-related matters in the region. All RPSG webinars are recorded and are available on the RPSG's [website](#) and the RPSG's [YouTube](#) channel.

Firstly, in June, the RPSG hosted their 10th webinar, titled “AfCFTA: Implementation and progress to date”. Chaired by Dr Juanita Maree, the webinar welcomed seven leading panellists from Africa’s respective Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Indeed, the webinar marked the first time all the respective RECs were present on one call, which shows the interest in the AfCFTA to work towards a more integrated Africa in terms of trade. Although the AfCFTA could increase intra-African trade by up to 52.3%, the start has been relatively slow thus far. Therefore, trading under the AfCFTA must be accelerated. Indeed, acceleration will aid the long-term objective of the AfCFTA, which is “*boosting intra-African trade, integration, and development*”, amongst other matters. Collectively, the WCO ESA RPSG is eager to see how trading under the AfCFTA unfolds.

Secondly, in November, the RPSG hosted their 11th webinar titled “*Connecting the ESA Region through technology and trade digitalization*”. The webinar hosted international speakers and

industry experts, including Martin Cameron from Trade Advisory, Jason Blackman from DHL, Anthony O’Sullivan from the World Logistics Passport (WLP), and Juanita Clark from the Digital Council Africa. Digitalization has played an undeniable role in keeping economies afloat throughout the pandemic. E-commerce and online platforms have enabled large corporations, small and medium enterprises, and informal businesses to continue business operations and keep supply chains running through hard lockdowns and restrictions on the movement of people and goods.

Lastly, in March, the RPSG hosted their 12th webinar titled “*Practically tackling NTBs in the ESA Region*” as part of its current focus area for the first quarter of the year 2022. The webinar brought together esteemed panelists, including a Senior Expert of NTB/TPT/SPS, AfCFTA Secretariat, Ms. Kuenia Molapo, and Executive Director of tralac, Ms. Trudi Hartzenberg. Through these discussions and information-sharing, the RPSG notes the growth and contribution of the AfCFTA in terms of trade liberalization within the continent. Indeed, the Tripartite and AfCFTA online NTB reporting, monitoring, and elimination tool is instrumental to improving intra-regional trade in Africa.

3. Work plan and progress made on the deliverables for 2022

The RPSG hopes to continue to make inroads on the most relevant customs and trade-related issues to aid trade facilitation in the ESA region. Consequently, an in-depth work plan has been devised, signed off and approved by the Governance Structure, the ROCB, and importantly, the ESA Vice-Chair, Mr. Adrian Swarres from Zimbabwe. The work plan identified five priority areas in 2022, which will help the RPSG build a resilient, intact regional private sector, which can add valuable insights per our Terms of Reference and guide us with Regional Customs in the ever-changing trade landscape. These include disseminating new technology and revised workflows, focusing on AfCFTA and Category commitments under the WTO-TFA. Our five projects include:

1. Governance Meetings

- a. Four virtual meetings for 2022

2. Focus areas as per our Work Groups/Portfolios

- a. AEO Programme
- b. Implementation and Monitoring of Projects as per RPSG
- c. Communication: Strengthen the awareness in the Private Sector
- d. Digitalization of value-added workflows
- e. Coordinated border movement: Land borders – Vienna convention
- f. Linkage in the Policies, bringing the core principle back into harmonization and simplification
- g. All regions link with Transit Bureau
- h. Focus and priority setting in East (EAC & COMESA)
- i. Focus and priority setting in South (SACU & SADC)

3. Elections of the new Chair

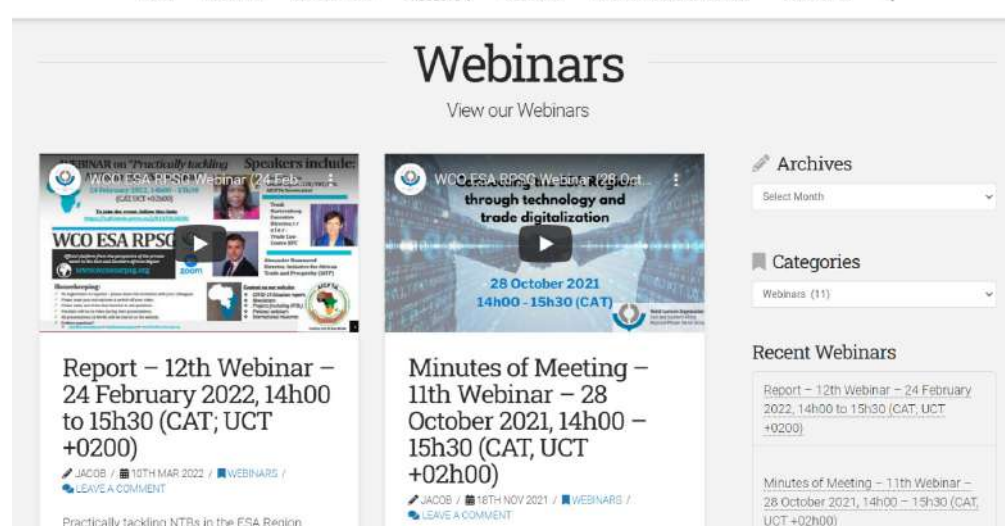
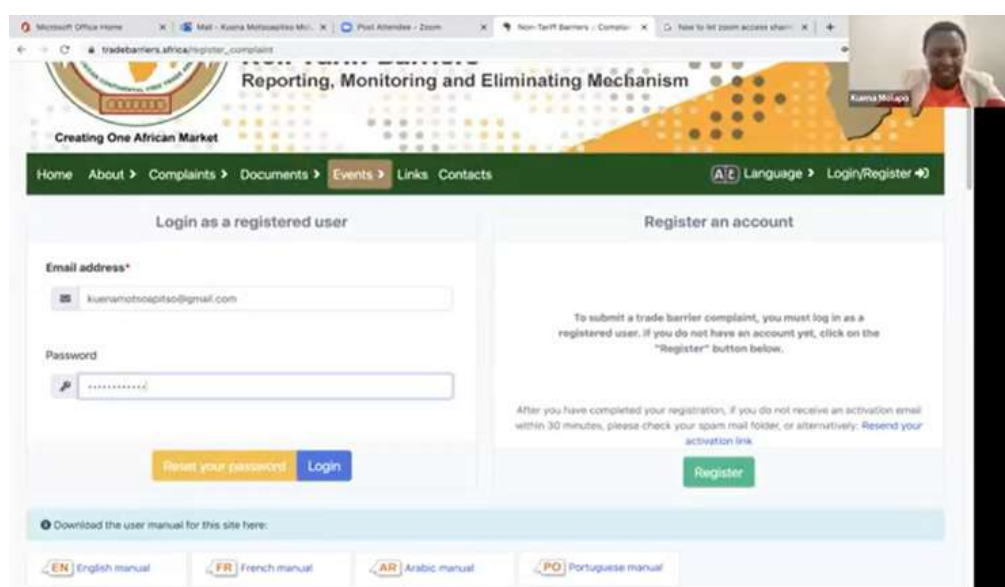
4. Projects and objectives (webinars)

5. Publications and other deliverables

- a. Surveys, newsletters, blog posts, and other publications to gain regional insights.
- b. Case studies based on Coordinated Border Management – drawing from FESARTA's investigations in the region
- c. Corridor Management (we have 11 corridors and can establish a grid on the lessons learned to foster a more integrated and harmonized approach)

Along with the RPSG's primary objectives listed on the [website](#), several focus areas for 2022 have been identified, including (1) NTBs, (2) Disruptive Technologies in the ESA Region, (3) AfCFTA Update, and (4) eCommerce & Digital Trade in the ESA Region. Also, there are three focus areas for 2022 regarding deliverables: newsletters, webinars, and research (articles and reports). The “Covid-19 Situation Reports” will continue to provide an overview of the pandemic's impact, lessons learned, and progress in the 24 member countries.

Throughout the challenging year of 2022, the RPSG has continued to provide relevant customs and trade-related information to their members across the 24 member countries concerning their focus areas. Indeed, adding to the aim of the RPSG of becoming the apex voice for the private sector in the region, the RPSG has uploaded several blog posts to the website. These blog posts have been filed under the different projects and in conjunction with the work plan for the year.



ROCB STAFF ESTABLISHMENT

The current ROCB staff comprises the Director, one Programme Officer, Finance Officer, Administrator/PA to the Director and a Clerk. All staff are from Kenya. The office received virtual support from the following Members: Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.



**Larry Liza;
Director**



**Faith Mosongo
Programme Officer**



**Samuel Wachiuri
Finance Officer**



**Judy Mwaura
Administrator &
PA to Director**



**Jamilah Mutah
Clerk / Assistant
Administrator**



**Erick Kaburu
ICT Officer**



East and Southern Africa Region

ROCB CONTACTS

Larry Liza,
Director,
World Customs Organization, East & Southern Africa,
Regional Office for Capacity Building,
P. O. Box 50581- 00200,
NAIROBI, KENYA.
Tel.: +254 70 901 1611/12/15
E-mail: larry.liza@wcoesarocb.org