



WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

Project "To Progress the Trade Facilitation (TF) Agenda within the framework of the WCO Mercator Programme in the East and Southern Africa Region, 2016 – 2019" -
Funded by the Finnish Government

1st Steering Committee Meeting

Mombasa, Kenya 6 - 8 February 2017

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Opening Session

The 1st Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of WCO ESA Project II took place from 6 – 8 February 2017 in Mombasa, Kenya, and was hosted by the Kenya Revenue Authority. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Tom Moyane (ESA Vice-Chair and Commissioner, SARS) and attended by SC members from South Africa, Uganda, Angola, Finnish Customs, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the WCO Secretariat. The Kenya Revenue Authority and ESA ROCB attended as Observers.

During the opening remarks, participants informed the Meeting of their latest developments, current modernization initiatives and challenges faced. The participants agreed that certain issues remained critical to the operations of Customs, particularly integrity in Customs, security, Customs/Tax cooperation and transit. They expressed their appreciation of the impact and results of the first WCO-ESA Project, and welcomed the new WCO-ESA II as a very timely Project to assist Members to respond to the challenges in implementing the WTO TFA. The SC also took note that the recommendations from the Ruka Resolutions have been implemented.

The participants also thanked the Finnish Government for its continued support to the ESA Region.

2. **WCO-ESA Project I final Financial Report and review of reallocation of remaining funds:** The SC took note of an overview of the final financial situation of the first WCO ESA Project, which came to an end on 31 March 2016, as presented by Mr. Patrick Gyan, WCO Regional Development Manager for East and Southern Africa and also fund manager for the Project. The SC welcomed the final Financial Report and agreed that the remaining funds from the first WCO ESA Project (totaling EUR 129 667) should be utilized for LMD workshops for the 6 Member administrations that had already submitted requests for support. The SC urged the WCO and the Project Team to ensure that the workshops are carried out by the end of the year, and also urged the ESA Members to be more committed to agreed WCO mission timeframes.
3. **Updates on the recruitment process for Project staff:** The WCO gave an update on the process of recruitment for the positions of Project Manager, Regional Expert and Project Assistant.

Mrs. Brenda Mundia, Deputy Director, WCO Capacity Building Directorate, informed the Meeting that the WCO had conducted the recruitment process in accordance with the agreed criteria and with its general policy guidelines for job recruitment.

Recruitment to the position of Project Manager was conducted as a first step, so that the appointee could contribute to the process of filling the remaining positions. Following the successful recruitment of a Project Manager in the person of Ms. Riitta Passi, the recruitment process for the positions of Regional Expert and Project Assistant has also been conducted in collaboration with Ms. Passi.

Assessment of applications received and shortlisting based on pre-determined evaluation criteria: this activity was carried out by the WCO Secretariat jointly with the Project Management Team and ROCB ESA, except for the position of Project Manager.

Interviews with shortlisted candidates through telephone conferencing, with an interview panel comprising representatives of the WCO Secretariat, the Project Management Team and ROCB ESA: in the case of the Project Manager, the interview was conducted by a panel from the WCO Secretariat.

A total of 8 applications were received from Finnish citizens for the position of Project Manager, and 4 candidates were interviewed.

A total of 33 applications were received for the post of Regional Expert, as follows:

- 19 from ESA Customs Administrations
- 5 from the ESA Region (non-Customs)
- 6 from Customs Administrations outside the ESA Region
- 3 from outside the ESA Region and not from Customs Administrations.

Following the assessment process, 7 candidates were shortlisted and interviewed; 5 of them were from ESA Customs Administrations.

A total of 62 applications were received for the post of Project Assistant:

- 24 from ESA Customs Administrations
- 24 from the ESA Region (non-Customs)
- 4 from other Customs Administrations outside the ESA Region
- 10 from outside the ESA Region and not from Customs Administrations.

Following the assessment process, 5 candidates were shortlisted and interviewed, all of them from ESA Customs Administrations.

The WCO reported that the process would be finalized in the next two weeks.

4. **WCO updates and news:** Mrs. Brenda Mundia provided an update on upcoming global meetings and events, including in particular the forthcoming meeting of the Capacity Building Committee (CBC), as well as joint CBC sessions with the TFA Working Group and the Integrity Sub-Committee, to be held from 6 – 10 March 2017. She provided insights into the theme of, and Agenda for these meetings, which included topics initiated by the Policy Commission such as Customs-Tax Cooperation and Performance Measurement. Also, the Meeting was updated on the proposed Mercator Programme operating model, including the proposed maturity model for measuring the results and effectiveness of Capacity Building support that will be presented to the CBC for endorsement. Mrs. Mundia also provided updates on the tools that are being developed by the WCO to support its Capacity Building initiatives for Members. These tools include Project Management training material, updates to the relevant chapters of the Capacity Building Development Compendium in order to align it on the training material developed, Transit Guidelines that are scheduled to be launched at the WCO Global Transit Conference to be held immediately after the Council Sessions in July, and Single Window e-learning modules.
5. **Regional updates and news:** Mr. Larry Liza, Director, ESA ROCB, provided an update on upcoming regional meetings, particularly the next Governing Council which will be held in Uganda on 11 and 12 May 2017; status of the development of the new Regional Strategy and Implementation Plan (2017-2022); completed, upcoming and pending Capacity Building activities; status of TFA implementation in the Region and collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) on TFA implementation; and the regional research programme.

6. **Work Plan based on requests for assistance by ESA Member**

Administrations: Ms. Riitta Passi, Project Manager, WCO-ESA Project, gave an overview of the application process and presented a summary of the requests received.

She reminded the Meeting that in accordance with the Project Document agreed between the WCO and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, which was also fully supported by the SC, "participation in the project will be open for countries requesting assistance as determined by the Project Steering Committee".

At the final meeting for the first WCO ESA Project, held in Ruka, Finland in March 2016, the SC recommended that the WCO prepare a template to be used by Members for the application process. It was also recommended that Category C measures under the TFA Agreement, as identified by the Governments concerned, should be prioritized, and that special consideration should be given to requests from Less Developed Countries (LDCs) and from countries that have not yet benefitted from assistance, or have benefitted to a lesser degree.

In this regard, a letter accompanied by the Guidelines was sent to the ESA Customs Administrations on 9 December 2016, inviting them to submit request(s) for assistance by 25 January 2017; it was indicated that such requests should fit within the scope of the Project Components and should support the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and Organizational Capacity. The ROCB also forwarded the letter to the Regional Contact Points on 13 December 2016, and the WCO sent a reminder on 19 January 2017 – again, to all DGs in the Region.

The WCO received 49 requests for assistance from 9 ESA Customs Administrations. Most of the requests submitted related to Risk Management, Implementation of the RKC and the TFA, AEO, SW, HR Management and support to the RTCs.

The SC acknowledged the process and recommended that all the requests received be validated and verified to avoid overlap, and that a detailed implementation plan including baseline data be presented at the next SC Meeting, to be held in the margins of the July WCO Council sessions.

Progress with the implementation of the requested assistance, as well as the financial situation, will be monitored at the SC Meeting to be held in February/March 2018, and a decision will then be made as to whether further requests for assistance can be submitted by ESA Members.

7. **AOB:** The Meeting was briefed on the Project Launch to be held on 7 February. The next meeting of the SC will take place in the margins of the WCO Council Sessions in Brussels in July 2017.

8. Project Launch on 7 February:

In his opening speech, WCO Secretary General Kunio Mikuriya stressed the key role played by Customs in terms of economic competitiveness, revenue collection and the protection of society from illicit trade, and welcomed the positive outcomes of WCO-ESA Project I in improving the efficiency of Customs, particularly with respect to enhanced border management.

The Secretary General went on to thank the Finnish Government for its continued support for the Region through the funding of this second phase of the Project, under the Mercator Programme launched in 2014 to support Governments in implementing trade facilitation measures, including those prescribed under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, in a consistent manner using WCO tools and instruments.

Representing the Finnish Government, H.E. Ambassador Tarja Fernandez and Customs Director General Antti Hartikainen spoke of their intentions to support the ESA Region; from the Region itself, Commissioner Tom Moyane of the South African Revenue Service (SARS), in his capacity as WCO Vice-Chair, and Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection Mr. Julius Musyoki of the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), talked about their willingness to maximize the benefits received from the Project.

In addition to the keynote speakers, the Launch was also attended by the members of the Steering Committee and other development partners in the Region. The event benefited from widespread media coverage.

9. Visit to Mombasa Port

Members of the SC visited the Port of Mombasa on the third day of the Meeting, to familiarize themselves with the new port and its operations.

Annex - List of Participants

South Africa - Mr. MOYANE Tom – Commissioner of SARS and Regional Vice-Chair (Chair of the Meeting)

WCO - Mrs. MUNDIA Brenda – Deputy Director, WCO Capacity Building Directorate

WCO - Mr. GYAN Patrick - Regional Development Manager, ESA Region

Angola - Ms. MAWETE Zizela - Senior Adviser

Finland - Mr. HARTIKAINEN Antti - Director General of Customs

Finland – Mr. POUTIAINEN Mika – Customs Expert, Finnish Customs

Finland – Mr. KOIVU Jan – Desk Officer, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Finland – Mr. PIISPANEN Antti – Commercial Counselor, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Kenya - Mr. MUSYOKI Julius - Commissioner of Customs and Border Control (Observer)

ROCB - Mr. LIZA Larry – Director of the ESA ROCB (Observer)

ROCB – Ms. Faith Mosongo, Programme Manager (Observer and assistant)

South Africa – Ms. NTOMBELA Thabile – SARS Senior Manager

Uganda -Mr. KATESHUMBWA Dicksons - Commissioner of Customs

WCO – Ms. PASSI Riitta - Project Manager
