

WORK PLANS OF WORKING GROUPS
As endorsed by the Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC)
during the Third CCC Meeting
Baku, Azerbaijan, 1-3 December 2004

I. Working Group A

A. Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures and Documentation

1. The countries that have recently modernized their Codes would circulate them to others who are actively engaged in the process in order to use that experience.
2. The Revised Kyoto Convention represents the pathway to modernization and it was recommended that seminars be conducted as needed to facilitate those members who have not acceded to the Convention to do so.
3. Trade facilitation is based largely on 'informed compliance'. This places an obligation on Customs to inform the trade and transport industry on their requirements in order to promote enhanced compliance levels. Customs have different approaches to the communications mechanisms to advise and consult with the private sector on these requirements. It was proposed to exchange information on the various methods of such communication, such as the use of web-based technologies and consultation mechanisms with representatives of the trade and transport community. This subject could be included in one of the Working Group Meetings.
4. The Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan use similar documentation. It was proposed that the main documentation should be exchanged between member Customs and the patterns of customs stamps with a view to mutual recognition of each others' documentation.
5. The problem of different documentation requirements at the borders was acknowledged. It was proposed that the potential for a minimized standardized document 'pack' for presentation throughout the Region should be examined, using the recommendations of the EU TRACECA project as an initial basis. It was appreciated that this would not compromise the requirement for additional support documentation to be presented at the point of clearance. The TRACECA recommendations would be circulated to members for their comments.

B. Development of Border Posts and Facilities

6. It was considered important that initiatives such as the joint processing pilot project and the proposed investments on border infrastructure in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan should continue to be supported and further developed.
7. The problem of implementation of the joint processing pilot scheme at Akzhol-Korday being compromised by lack of corresponding support from other agencies at the border was appreciated. There was a need to include these other agencies in comprehending the 'goal' and implementation process of joint border processing as indicated within the Revised Kyoto Convention. Thus, it was proposed that a joint-border

processing forum be conducted at Bishkek in the spring of 2005 involving customs, border guards, other border agencies, stakeholders and international specialists to explain the concept and address the residual problems. It was suggested that Customs from the other member countries could attend as observers. It was agreed that Kazakh and Kyrgyz Customs would provide the participation of interested institutions and ministries of their countries and Secretariat would consider the finances.

8. It was considered that the progress towards implementation of joint processing would be facilitated by site visits to countries that have established joint processing operations. The resultant knowledge sharing of developed countries on joint processing on the borders would enable customs officers from the region to physically see the operation and discuss issues with those involved in the processing initiative. An alternative could be for Heads of a joint border post in Europe or the Far East to attend the Bishkek forum to relate their experiences and how they overcame the perceived joint processing constraints.

9. Members recognized the problems associated with the interests of large number of control agencies working on the border. The European approach, now adopted by other countries, has been to develop integrated border management. It is proposed that such an initiative could be explored by means of a technical presentation at the Bishkek Seminar for members to be in a position to assess whether piloting might be possible at a future date.

10. The EU TRACECA program proposed standardization of procedures and performance standards for borders in the Region. Unfortunately, these were only provided shortly before the project was completed. It was proposed that these recommendations be circulated in order to consider whether these could be used as a standard for the Region.

11. The need to upgrade border infrastructure is ever-present. In 2005 implementation of the border infrastructure loans should be effected in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. Similar initiatives were under consideration for Mongolia and for Uzbekistan. Requests for possible interventions should be directed to the Secretariat for consideration.

C. Development of Simplified Transit Systems

12. The Working Group attached high priority to the need to enhance transit systems in the region to promote regional trade. Members expressed the requirement for all countries to accede to the TIR Convention. PRC indicated their desire to progress towards possible accession by proposing to host a Transit Seminar in PRC during 2005. The purpose would be to knowledge share on the experience of TIR with other countries that have implemented TIR and to invite technical specialists from the IRU and ADB to assist in the discussions.

13. The need for an alternative to the TIR system to address intra-regional transits was recognized as vital to regional growth. It was proposed that the Secretariat present a plan of action for possible development of such a system for discussion at the Transit Seminar. In the meantime, the strategy of developing bilateral transit agreements should be encouraged and support for bilateral meetings in pursuit of such agreements should

be considered. Therefore, efforts of countries to sign mutual agreements on regional transit needs to be recognized, as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have undertaken.

14. A particular aspect to be addressed will be access to the rail database to obtain advance information on transits that could potentially reduce border transit processing requirements. Uzbekistan agreed to present a paper on the subject at the PRC Transit Seminar.

II. Working Group B

D. Data Sharing and ICT for Customs Operations

15. The exchange of data between the member countries would require a legal framework which would need to be addressed as an initial set. In line with this, a review of current legislation relating to data sharing will be conducted through country analysis of relevant legislation.

16. In order to employ electronic data sharing in a timely, uniform and meaningful manner, the Working Group made a number of recommendations that include the following:

- (a) development of standard list of information fields,
- (b) agreed uniform format for data exchange,
- (c) agreed reference system,
- (d) submission of single administrative documents (SAD's) on bilateral basis,
- (e) setting up of ICT Specialist Working Group, and
- (f) formation of technical Working Group among KAZ/KGZ/TAJ Specialists who will meet for mutual assistance in ICT on the development of a unified automated information system (UAIS).

17. The ICT Specialist Working Group should be set up as a matter of urgency. Nominations should be made in time for a convening of the working group at the Singapore meeting of the CCC on 26th to 28th January 2005.

E. Development of Risk Management (RM), Post Clearance Audit (PCA) and Customs Intelligence (CI)

18. Risk management and post clearance audit are now recognized as important elements in trade facilitation and that progress in these areas are crucial in the development of a modern Customs Service geared to meet the new challenges. Systems to cover these aspects of Customs controls require specific tailoring to meet the particular needs and circumstances of each individual member country. To this end, there is a need to establish a mechanism to assist the member countries in:

- (a) reviewing current position on risk management through country reports,
- (b) holding discussions and sharing experiences in these areas,
- (c) achieving the greatest possible degree of harmonization of development,
- (d) developing mutual cooperation between the member countries.

19. To meet this need and to respond adequately to the present environment, a working group comprising one member from each country will be set up to coordinate

developments in these areas. These officials should be of senior rank and produce reports on developments in risk management, post clearance audit controls in their respective countries. This working group should meet as part of the Customs Cooperation Committee. The nominations to this working group should be made as soon as possible and the group should convene at the next meeting in Singapore scheduled for 26th -28th January 2005.

20. A workshop will also be held for the RM/PCU working group as an initial step and that regional and in country training on a 'train the trainers' basis should be given by selected recognized experts in these fields.

21. PRC will host a seminar on Risk Management and Post Clearance Audit in Apr/May 2005.