

**DIRECTORATE OF TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC
RELATIONS**

Country Questionnaire Results

**II MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
CUSTOMS FACILITATION**

Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

ACS Secretariat, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 5th September, 2013

Customs Facilitation Working Group

List of 15 Participating Countries:

1. Antigua & Barbuda (AB)
2. Barbados (BDS)
3. Colombia (COL)
4. Costa Rica (CRA)
5. Curacao (CRC)
6. Dominican Republic (DR)
7. Guatemala (GTA)
8. Guyana (GUY)
9. Haiti (HAI)
10. Jamaica (JAM)
11. Mexico (MEX)
12. Panama (PAN)
13. St. Kitts and Nevis (SKN)
14. St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG)
15. Trinidad & Tobago (TT)

Questionnaire Results

1. Does your country use the World Customs Organization Harmonized System (WCO HS)?

Yes/Version		No
7	2007	0
6	2012	
1	1996	

It was observed that among the Latin American Member states, comprising of 5 members, the latest version of the World Customs Organization Harmonized System (i.e. 2012) was used in their Customs offices. The CARICOM members operated using older versions of the WCO HS, i.e. Versions 1996 and 2007. Antigua and Barbuda noted that they had plans to update to the 2007 version in early 2013. St. Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana indicated plans to upgrade to WCO HS 2012 in the near future. Whether the difference in versions used by Member states is a weak point, the extent to which it creates discrepancies in procedures or if it acts as a hindrance to harmonization should be investigated.

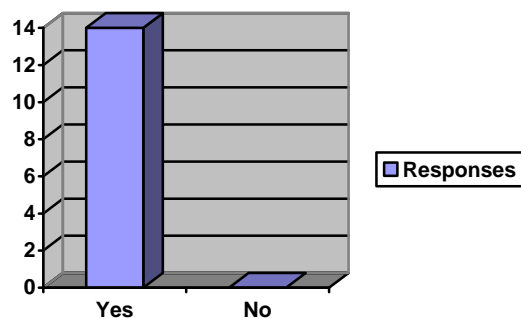
**(Curacao is not included at present due to the incomplete questionnaire).*

2. Which Automated Customs System is being used in your Customs departments?

Automated Customs System	No. of Countries
ASYCUDA	5
TRIPS	2
SAAI	1
SIGA	2
CASEX (Proprietary)	1
SAQBE	1
CASE (Customs Automated Services)	1
MUISCA (Modelo Único de Ingresas)	1
TICA	1

A wide variety of computerized customs systems are used among Member states, the UNCTAD ASYCUDA being the most popular. St. Kitts and Nevis commented that while they are currently using TRIPS, they planned to change over to ASYCUDA.

3. Is the digitization of customs systems and processes a priority?



There was unanimous agreement amongst the 14 Member states who answered this question, that the digitization of systems and processes was a priority for Members. This comes as no surprise due to the greater efficiency and accuracy which can be achieved from automated, computerized processes and cost benefits resulting from the usage of less paper and less man power.

**(Curacao is not included at present due to the incomplete questionnaire).*

4. Which processes in your country are digitized?

a) Table showing countries which have digitized processes (X)

Process	AB	BDS	COL	CRA	DR	GUY	GTA	HAI	JAM	MEX	PAN	SKN	SVG	TT
Manifest		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X
Import Declaration	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Export Declaration	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tax-duty Calculations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Selectivity		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Trade Statistics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Risk Management		X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	X

It was noted that quite a few processes had been digitized amongst territories which indicates the transition to paperless customs processing and the growing trend towards computerized, automated process which reflects the responses given in Question 3 Jamaica indicated that it had only partially implemented digitization for processes such as: manifest, export declaration, selectivity and risk management. Antigua and Barbuda stated that they were building profiles for selectivity and risk management processes at present.

b) Table showing frequency of digitization for each process

Process	Frequency of Digitization Among Member States
Manifest	10
Import Declaration	13
Export Declaration	13
Tax-duty Calculations	14
Selectivity	11
Trade Statistics	13
Risk Management	9
Proof of Electronic Value	1

5. Which customs related information can be obtained electronically (online)?

Country	Customs related information available online
Antigua and Barbuda	Customs law and regulations, HS Tariff and Customs (Control and Management) Act

Barbados	None (website currently being upgraded)
Colombia	Consultation Customs Tariff, tariff classifications issued, foreign trade statistics, customs procedures and services, process and trade services, forms, technical regulations, tax, customs and exchange etc.
Costa Rica	Transactions, procedures & rules
Curacao	None (website to be launched in the near future)
Dominican Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information concerning legislation, regulations, norms, laws and decrees • Trade agreements. • Import duties, taxes. • List of terms, passenger information • Basic information: Country code, unit of measurement, currency exchange • Application and checks, quotes, settlements, customs declarations. • Payments. <p>List of Customs-Free Production Zones, list of quotas, quota allocation. Application for Tax Exemption 0% Tariff Rates Ship Arrival Itinerary Contact Center. DGA Digital Journal</p>
Guatemala	Tariff data, query statements by importers, customs procedures, pending transits, filling instructive goods declarations DUA-GT.
Guyana	Status of Declaration Procedures on Importation and Exportation and Paying Duties Customs Brokers and Licensing Travellers' Information World Trade Point Regulation Link Calculation of Customs Duties Customs Declaration Form (C73) Notification for Export Forms

Haiti	Information on customs regulations and an On-line help desk. Website is currently under construction.
Mexico	All information contained in the customs document used for the import and export of goods
Jamaica	Most procedures are available on our website. We can provide any other information upon request via email.
Panama	All information is provided online
St. Kitts and Nevis	Legislation, forms, Common External Tariff
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Reports e.g. manifest, declaration, enforcement etc, and a variety of customs forms
Trinidad and Tobago	(a) Non registered users: B/L Tracking, Manifest Tracking Registered users: Online Tariff, Tax Treatment and owned Declaration processed on the system

Data shows that a wide variety of information is available online. Some states were extremely limited in the scope of material available online. Where it was indicated that there was little or no information available online, there are plans to launch or upgrade websites to provide information online.

6. Overall assessment of customs facilities and infrastructure:

Country	Overall Assessment
Antigua and Barbuda	Poor working conditions, lacking in physical infrastructure and facilities.
Barbados	Customs and Excise Department is good condition due to recent renovations. I.T. infrastructure received major enhancement with the implementation of a risk management tool, an IT tool for the managing of VAT, and the upgrade of the Website which is currently on-going. Additionally, a number of desk tops were

	made available to the extent that each officer's desk is now complete with a computer. It is proposed that (i) an upgrade to ASYCUDA World will commence before the year; (ii) the implementation of a Document Management Workflow System will be implemented shortly; (iii) the implementation of an Electronic Single Window is being considered
Colombia	In general terms, customs facilities and infrastructure are good. However there are certain shortcomings within Directorates being screened by the competent agency in the state.
Costa Rica	Adequate - Presently working on projects to improve the customs infrastructure.
Curacao	Physical Infrastructure: Most buildings are recently renovated and in good condition, however there are a few which require upgrades to meet customs standards. I.T.: Systems are up to date.
Dominican Republic	The Dominican Republic has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 terminal areas for cargo and passengers • 17 marine terminals. • 5 terminals border 19 fiscal deposits: of re-export, general warehouses & deconsolidation
Guatemala	General conditions of the customs infrastructure of the republic are acceptable, but there is still much to be done to the organizing the infrastructure for example properly defining the primary zone and provide greater safety for our staff and visitors.
Guyana	Moving towards Customs modernization (SWAPS etc.)
Haiti	Rehabilitation and Construction programme under way. All services relating to operations are available in Customs offices.
Jamaica	ICT infrastructure is good as they have a Central Data Center, high speed wide area network and local area network, voice over IP telephony and computer workstations at most locations.
Mexico	Considering that in Mexico there are 49 customs in their territory, some of which take a greater volume of daily transactions. These are equipped

	with infrastructure, equipment and automated processes to improve foreign trade facilitation control and customs clearance.
Panama	General infrastructure of Panama Customs is in good condition and the whole system is automated.
St. Kitts and Nevis	Good physical infrastructure. I.T. infrastructure is up to date.
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Current customs infrastructure is congested. Awaiting completion of two new buildings in 2013 to resolve congestion.
Trinidad and Tobago	The IT infrastructure is good, the physical infrastructure is lacking. Currently awaiting approval for occupation of new office building.

Overall, customs facilities in the Greater Caribbean Region were said to be in good condition. Among CARICOM Member States, physical infrastructure was a major concern. Some found that current physical infrastructure was lacking as indicated by Barbados (who had recently renovated), Curacao, Trinidad and Tobago and especially Antigua and Barbuda. Information Technology systems were a strong point among participants, with most being up-to-date. Another concern noted was the need for better organization within the Customs agency as noted by Colombia and Guatemala which has been pinpointed for review to improve operations.

7. Main priority needs for Customs Facilitation in your country

Country	Areas of priority
Antigua and Barbuda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proper update of equipment and tools 2. Update to computerized systems 3. Detailed training in customs related fields 4. Proper laboratories, testing devices and equipment
Barbados	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity Building 2. Training
Colombia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publication: legislation and administrative procedures on the Internet, points of view of customs procedures, draft standards

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Clearance of goods within 48 hours after the arrival of the goods or advance declaration initial direct download 3. Shipments 4. Automation 5. Risk management
Costa Rica	Risk management and Authorized Economic Operator
Curacao	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgraded IT systems and computers 2. Capacity building related to linguistics and team building 3. Modernization of customs techniques 4. Improved physical infrastructure
Dominican Republic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To achieve a balance between efficient clearance and customs controls, ie, decrease operational costs in terms of streamlining the office without weakening existing customs controls through risk systems, Single Window and form of the OAS.
Guatemala	Enhancement of Customs facilitation: Due to its great importance to the tax administration to achieve their goals, it is developing many projects in support of customs facilitation and to expedite the passage through Customs such as paperless customs procedures.
Guyana	Increase in Trade for Economic growth
Haiti	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinforcement of the automated system. 2. Establishment of a Control Service a posteriori 3. Creation of a Fraud Statistics Database. 4. Establishment of a service to users at customs offices Implementation of Risk Management procedures.
Jamaica	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refining of existing procedures (Business Processes) in accordance with best practices. 2. Training Full implementation of automated systems.
Mexico	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Streamlined procedures through a "one stop shop" 2. Unobtrusive equipment

	New Scheme of Certified Companies
Panama	1. The main priority is the New Customs Management System (SIGA)
St. Kitts and Nevis	1. Advanced Cargo/Passenger Information Systems 2. Electronic Integration of Customs and Ports
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1. Comprehensive public relation mechanism 2. Upgrade to ASYCUDA World 3. Implementation of a Customs website and CCTV 4. New Customs legislation 5. Effective (port) Auditing system
Trinidad and Tobago	N/A

While many areas were highlighted for improvement amongst member states, a few stood out as more prevalent. The issue of making increased efforts to modernize processes for streamlining customs procedures featured prominently in the Greater Caribbean. Further updates to the current technology were needed to improve operations at Customs facilities. Capacity building and training was also highlighted in order to have a properly educated the work force about systems and thereby increase efficiency in the work place. Lastly, a supportive and cohesive legislative arm which reflects the changes and evolution of customs transactions throughout the region was also mentioned, reflecting the importance of the governmental arm to the success of the improvements to Customs facilitation.