Protocol of Discussions in the ICT Working Group
Seminar on Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernisation
4-8 August 2003, Issyk-kul, Kyrgyz Republic

Data and Information Sharing and ICT Development for Customs Operations

In the process of discussions the following 3 major results have been achieved which will be submitted to each Customs Organisation and the CCC Meeting at Tashkent:

- Recommended the list of information for information exchange has been developed;
- The XML (Extended Message Language) format was proposed as a possible format for data submission together with other formats;
- Possibilities were discussed to exchange information on Export, Transit and Reconnaissance.

Progress Against Work Plan Items 18(i) to 18 (iv) from the April Almaty CCC Meeting

18(i) Exchange information on the use of classifiers and develop code-translation tables.

The Data Elements that which have been agreed as forming the information for exchange between Customs Agencies in the Region are shown at Attachment A.

The results of the outcome of the workshop are the first step towards gaining standardisation of data assigned for information sharing among the seminar participant countries. The Group developed a recommended list of data that can be considered by all Customs bodies of the Region to be used for information exchange.

18(ii) Study ICT applications in other regional transit systems.

The given issue was considered in the presentations given to the participants about Transit systems and TIR. At the same time they provided only for overall view of transit and TIR systems existing in certain Regions without describing the technical details and without demonstrating software applications.

18(iii) Feasibility study of the adoption of a bar code system.

The Working Group came to a conclusion that it is necessary to study in greater detail a possibility of introducing the Bar Code system for its application in the Customs processing procedures.

18(iv) Recommendation and development of an information exchange medium among member customs.

As major achievement of discussions in the Working Group was the agreement reached on consideration of a possibility to use the information sharing mechanisms based upon the replication of their data among the servers of the participant countries as well as on the basis of Web technologies. The XML format, alongside with other formats which at present becomes more and more popular was proposed

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as possible format for data exchange. The Data Elements that will be included in these information messages are described in Attachment A.

Recommendations

It was recognised by the Working Group that although information was shared and that initial agreement was reached in relation to data elements. They discussed an opportunity to discuss a possibility to share information on Export, Transit and Reconnaissance. The participants didn't have the authority to develop the final and binding agreement.

Therefore it is recommended that a specific ICT Working Group meeting be held with participation of specialists from each country:
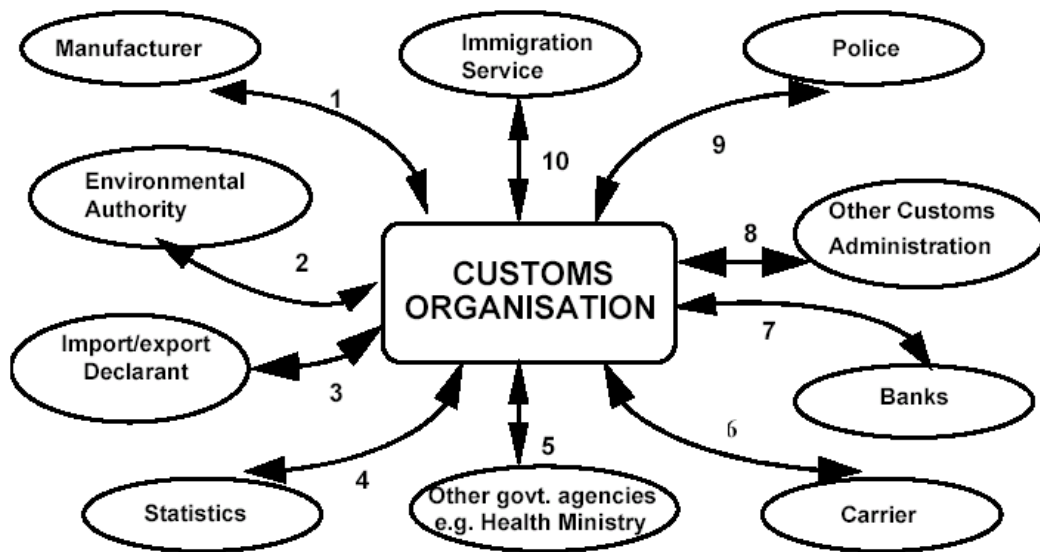- On the issues of analysis and compatibility of normative and reference information;
- In the sphere of bar-coding system applications and the processing of Customs clearance; and

It is also recommended that the data elements identified in Attachment A can be used as the starting point for information exchange.

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Attachment A

Data Element in Customs to Customs Messages	Standard Used	SAD Equivalent Field No.	Format
Customs Cargo Declaration Number		7	
Consignor		2	
Consignee		8	
Country of Destination Code		17	
Country of Departure Country		15	
Code of Country of Origin		34	
Number of Vehicles at Border		21	
Vehicle Identifier at Border		21	
Code of Transport Means at Border		25	
Commodity Code		33	
Net Mass		38	
Supplementary Units		41	
Number of Items		31	
Goods Description		31	
Marks and Numbers		31	
Customs Procedure Code		37	
Statistical Value		46	
Code for Foreign Currency		22	
Contract Invoice Value		42	
Contract Number and Date		44	
Weighbill Number		44	
Carrier		50	
TIR Carnet Number		53	
CMR Number		44	
Container Number		31	

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Attachment B

This figures illustrates the various information exchange interfaces that can be developed for a Customs Organisation to communicate with other external bodies. The format of the data elements in Attachment A forms the basis for interface 8 in the diagram above.

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Attachment C

10 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF ICT INTO CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION (recommended by International Experts)

1. Reform customs regulations/laws in line with country circumstances and international best practices.

2. Improve/re-engineer existing processes first and then build a computer system to suit or reinforce the improved process; do NOT computerize poor processes in the hope that it will improve them.

3. Define requirements in detail.

4. Ensure that project management and technical skills are available.

5. A customs automation system must link with relevant agencies, such as Ministries of Finance, Trade, Transport, etc.

6. ICT must have the capacity to interface with the systems of other countries.

7. Consult interested non-customs parties, such as trade representatives, brokers, agents, declarants, etc., at every stage.

8. Exercise caution in introducing/procuring a customs automation system that has never been implemented before.

9. Phase the implementation.

10. If feasible, assure sustainability (e.g. meeting ongoing operation, maintenance, upgrade and consumables costs) and lower budget pressures by charging fees for computer data entry/processing.

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Attachment D Work Program

Initiatives	Tasks	Activity/Output	Implementation Arrangements	Implementation Period	Assistance
4. Data and information sharing and ICT development for Customs Operations	Exchange information on use of classifiers used in customs and develop a code translation table	Conduct a comparative study on the data elements and coding system being used in Customs declarations on both sides	Study group led by Kazakhstan and PRC	Initial consultations completed, more detailed discussions need to be carried out as per recommendation	
	Study the ICT application in the regional transit system	Studying the two systems: • The Russian system is currently in use from the European border to Kazakh, Mongolian and PRC borders • The New Computerised Transit System. The most recent version of it is currently in testing phase in Estonia before extension to all Baltic States	A study group should be constituted		
	Feasibility study of adoption of a bar code	Establish the feasibility of a bar code system for quick joint identification of bill of lading and cargo declaration and goods			
	Information Exchange mechanism	Recommend and develop an information exchange mechanism among member customs	The Working Group has recommended the use of XML and a purpose built message initially designed at this meeting.		

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Attachment E Lessons Learned

Given the peculiarities of the development of harmonisation of normative and reference information (NRI) it is necessary to establish a Working Group that can complete the given process with the participation of International Experts in the area of Goods Declaration, NRI analysis and computer systems.

There should be some consistency in those attending these Working Group meetings to ensure continuity of knowledge and awareness of the Work Program and the tools required to meet the Work Program activities.

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