

Business Intelligence applied to customs' risks and valuation and the WCO Data Model
San Jose, Costa Rica
June 16-17, 2015

On June 16-17, 2015, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), jointly with the Secretariat for Central American Integration (SIECA) and Costa Rica's National Customs Service, held a capacity building workshop entitled "Business Intelligence applied to customs' risks and valuation and the WCO Data Model." The goal of the workshop was to introduce customs officials in Central America to the use and application of big data in customs procedures as well as the implementation of the WCO Data Model. The effective application of Business Intelligence and the WCO Data Model in Central America can help deepen regional market integration, promote trade facilitation policies and programs, and bolster regional and international trade.

The workshop was divided into two main sessions. The first session "Business Intelligence and Data Mining" was focused on providing information regarding basic business intelligence concepts, an introduction to data mining and application of data mining tools. Together, these modules were designed to assist customs officials with different methods to analyze customs data and statistics, design and manage customs control panels, introduce big data and data mining and its use in customs procedures (including best practices used by SUNAT in Peru), and knowledge discovery in data (KDD).

The second session "World Customs Organization Data Models" provided an introduction to the WCO Data model including implementation guidelines, international code standards, business processes and information models, and harmonized maximum data sets. Moreover, presenters delivered teaching modules on cross-border transactions, issuing electronic invoices, and best practices for exchanging information.

In addition to these capacity building modules, representatives from SIECA, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Road Transport Union delivered presentations on a variety of topics related to trade facilitation and regional integration. For example, SIECA's presentation focused on how the WCO Data Model can be used as a tool to further deepen economic and market integration within the Central American sub-region. It also introduced meeting participants to the PRAIIA project, a project designed to assist Central American countries in implementing the Central America – European Union Association Agreement.

The Inter-American Development Bank's presentation "Modernization of Frontiers in Central America" focused on several projects that are underway in the region including the implementation of international standards, single windows, coordinated risk management, Authorized Economic Operators, infrastructure and border security.

The International Road Transport Union (IRU) presented on their efforts for increased trade facilitation, adequate legislation to support trade, tourism and transportation, and efforts at the border to make customs procedures more efficient and effective. The IRU stressed the importance of the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods as one of the most important multilateral

agreements for international trade and transport. Presently, in Latin America, only Chile and Uruguay are contracting parties; Argentina, Brazil and Mexico are considering become contracting parties.

Meeting participants filled out evaluation forms regarding, among other things, the relevancy of the topics addressed. Twenty three evaluations were handed in to organizers. A review of the evaluations yields the following results:

- Eight participants indicated that, in general, the capacity building exercise was “Excellent” and eight participants indicated it was “Good”;
- Twelve participants indicated the subject matter of the capacity building was “Good”, 10 considered it as “Excellent” and one participant indicated it was “Satisfactory”;
- Sixteen participants indicated the subject matter was “Very Useful” and 7 indicated it was “Useful”;
- Customs officials highlighted Electronic Invoices and the WCO Data Model as the most relevant and useful for their respective countries; and
- Country participants also requested follow up activities in their respective countries for longer periods of time (e.g., one week) and for broader audiences.