

East Africa pools its regional resources

Pooling regional resources to boost development is the thrust of the slogan for a Customs training programme which the WCO has recently been supporting in the East African Community (EAC) sponsored and managed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Under the title 'Capacity Building of Master Trainers', the programme covers three key topics: valuation, HS classification and intelligence analysis. Between 16 and 20 students are participating in training sessions focused on the three topics. On average, four students from each of the five countries that make up the EAC – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – are taking part. Training in each topic is being delivered in six phases with the third phase of each having taken place recently.

Valuation and intelligence analysis training sessions took place at the Rwanda Revenue Authority Training Centre in Butare, and the Harmonized System classification session in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. With the assistance of facilitators from Japan Customs and the WCO, students have received comprehensive training on their specific subject and have been given opportunities to take a pro-active role in leading training sessions and in developing training materials, including curricula and lesson plans. The valuation group, for example, is developing a Customs Valuation Handbook which will be a useful tool for the Community.

This programme is linked to JICA's high level project to develop the capacity of EAC Customs administrations to operate a one-stop border post (OSBP) at Namanga, between Kenya and Tanzania, which will facilitate smooth and efficient Customs procedures at the border. Students are tasked with developing a training plan to enhance capacity building within their own administrations. As future Master Trainers, they will be utilised as mobile resource persons to provide effective training for Customs officers and Customs clearing agents in the region, enabling effective and efficient Customs procedures to be carried out, not only at the OSBP, but also at other airports and seaports.

The valuation and HS parts of the programme highlighted both the trade facilitation and revenue collection dimensions of these topics – general principles and international standards for Customs valuation and commodity classification, infrastructure issues and specific technical issues were discussed, while the intelligence analysis session included presentations on intelligence-driven risk management and relevant WCO tools and instruments, combined with practical exercises.

This programme is a good example of collaborative working arrangements and will help to enhance organizational capacity and strengthen management capabilities in order to share and develop institutional knowledge within the EAC.

More information

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