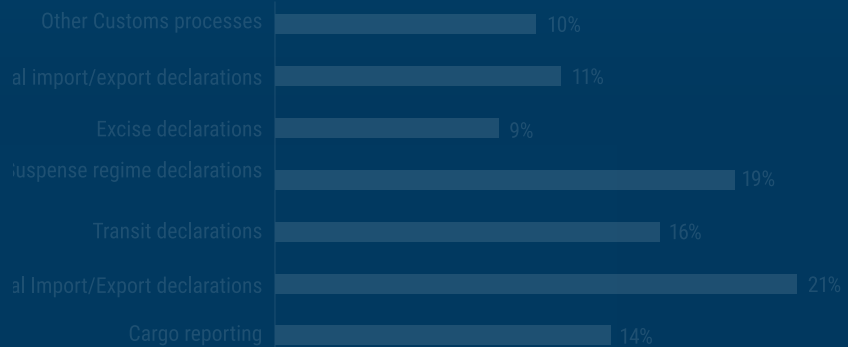


# ASYCUDA World COVID-19 Survey

Guidelines to Customs Administrations

S U M M A R Y R E P O R T | 2 0 2 1



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# ASYCUDAWorld

## COVID-19 Survey

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### Guidelines to Customs Administrations

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The fully automated environment provided by ASYCUDAWorld (AW) affords Customs, cross-border agencies and traders with the capacity to electronically submit and exchange data & documentation and computerize procedures. This enables the expediting of the clearance of imports, exports, transit trade and other trade transactions, thereby greatly reducing the need for face-to-face interaction.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to significantly affect all the facets of the international trade supply chain as well as the way the activities of the AW Implementation Project are conducted worldwide. Since March 2020, the global supply chains have been experiencing significant disruptions, including through reductions in trade volumes, declines in foreign direct investment, lower consumer goods demand, a reduction in commodity prices, and general economic decline in particular for vulnerable developing countries. The UNCTAD is fully committed to continue supporting partner countries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and recover strongly from the pandemic.










The ASYCUDA COVID-19 Customs Administration Survey was launched by UNCTAD to rapidly gather data in assessing the current conditions in the Customs Administrations, to facilitate the implementation of UNCTAD guidelines for coping with COVID-19 measures. This summary analyses data collected in 2020.

# ASYCUDA







## COMMUNITY



### EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

-  Afghanistan
-  Albania
-  Bosnia and Herzegovina
-  Georgia
-  Gibraltar
-  Kazakhstan
-  Kosovo
-  Moldova
-  Turkmenistan

### MIDDLE EAST

-  Iraq
-  Jordan
-  Lebanon
-  Palestine
-  Syria
-  Yemen

### AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

-  Anguilla
-  Antigua and Barbuda
-  Aruba
-  Barbados
-  Belize
-  Bolivia
-  Caribbean Netherlands
-  Curaçao
-  Dominica
-  El Salvador
-  Grenada
-  Guyana
-  Haiti
-  Jamaica
-  Montserrat
-  Nicaragua
-  Puerto Rico
-  Saint Kitts and Nevis
-  Saint Lucia
-  Saint Pierre and Miquelon
-  Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
-  Suriname
-  Trinidad and Tobago
-  Turks and Caicos
-  Venezuela

### AFRICA

-  Angola
-  Benin
-  Burkina Faso
-  Burundi
-  Cabo Verde
-  Central African Republic
-  Chad
-  Comoros
-  Congo
-  Côte d'Ivoire
-  D.R. Congo
-  Djibouti
-  Equatorial Guinea
-  Eritrea
-  Eswatini (former Swaziland)
-  Gabon
-  Gambia
-  Guinea
-  Guinea-Bissau
-  Lesotho
-  Liberia
-  Madagascar
-  Malawi
-  Mali
-  Mauritania
-  Mozambique
-  Namibia
-  Niger
-  Rwanda
-  Saint Helena
-  Sao Tome and Principe
-  Seychelles
-  Sierra Leone
-  Sudan
-  Togo
-  Uganda
-  Zambia
-  Zimbabwe

### ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS

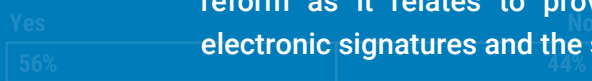
-  Bangladesh
-  Cambodia
-  Cook Islands
-  Fiji
-  Kiribati
-  Lao PDR
-  Maldives
-  Nauru
-  Nepal
-  New Caledonia
-  Niue
-  Papua New Guinea
-  Philippines
-  Samoa
-  Solomon Islands
-  Sri Lanka
-  Timor-Leste
-  Tonga
-  Tuvalu
-  Vanuatu

# In brief

**46**   
**Respondents**

**46**   
**Countries**  
& territories

- A high percentage of respondents still require both the electronic Customs declaration and supporting documentation to be submitted as hard copies. This is quite alarming in a pandemic situation.
- The majority of Customs Administrations do not mandate the use of online release orders by declarants which clearly illustrate that much more work is to be done with respect to facilitation of legitimate trade.
- There is a need to promote legislative and taxation reform as it relates to provisions for the use of electronic signatures and the simplification of taxation.
- A high percentage of respondents are not using self-assessment which is reflective of non-compliance/low trade facilitation.
- There is a dire need for the development and implementation of an ASYCUDA Change Management Strategy to assist Customs and Trade Administrations with the necessary transition to electronic trade.
- There is a very positive indication that Customs Administrations are extensively utilizing ASYCUDAWorld to submit cargo declarations.
- A high percentage of jurisdictions have removed tariffs on medical supplies illustrating very strong policy implementations in this area.
- Most Customs Administrations have changed AW taxation rules for the removal of tariffs.
- Customs Administrations must be commended for the high level of installation and deployment of ASYCUDA reporting facilities for trade impact analysis.



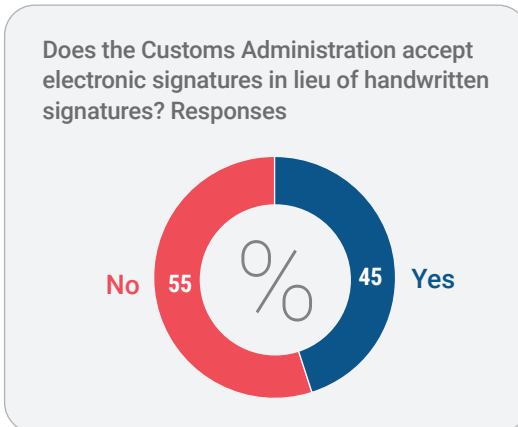


# Promotion of a **paperless** environment

## Use of Electronic Signatures

Notwithstanding the capacity of the automated system, a significant (55%) of respondents do not use electronic signature.

It appears that in some jurisdictions, although administrations are fully aware of the availability of the e-signature feature on AW, many have delayed the implementation due to absence of supporting legislative provisions or have deemed the username on the SAD as being acceptable.



*"The law is not clear on e-signatures"...*

*"For the moment not yet"...*

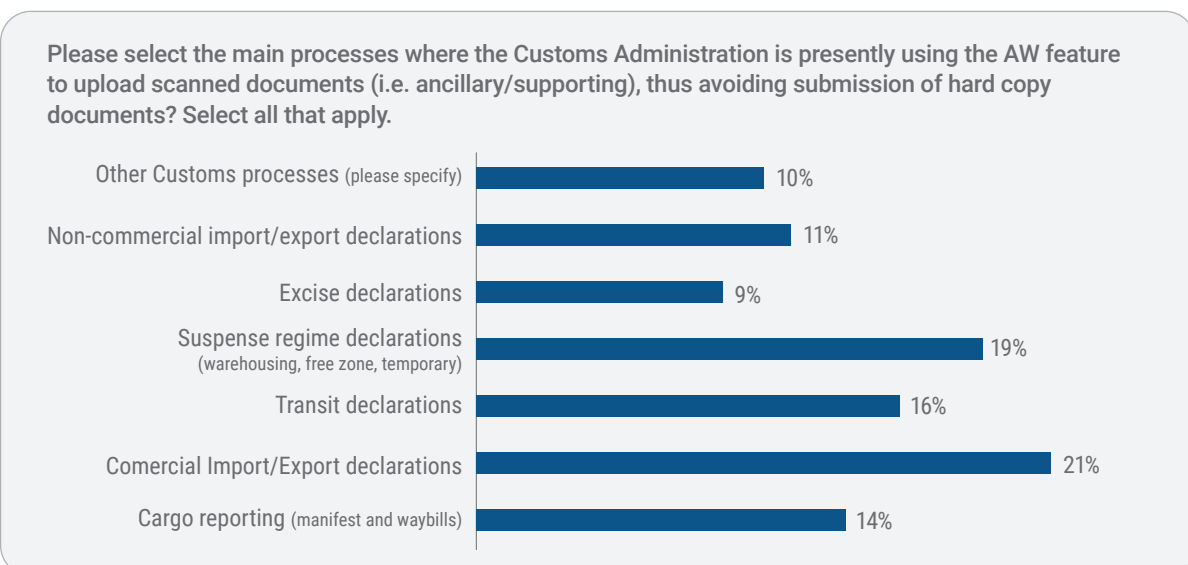
*"Does not require declarations to be physically signed for submission"...*

*"It is under process"... "Not yet implemented"*

## Use of Scanned Documents

A few respondents informed that they were processing certificates and permits from regulatory agencies through the AW electronic single window.

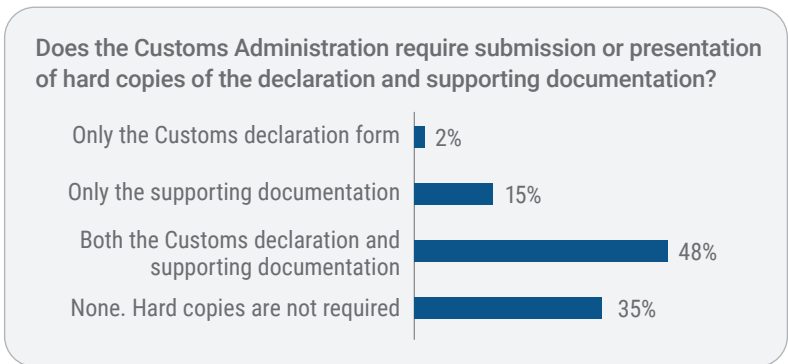
It is also observed that the AW scanned documents feature is mostly used for Commercial Import and Export regimes.



Others still required hard copies for the clearance of cargo to the extent of disabling the scanned documents upload feature due to storage limitations.

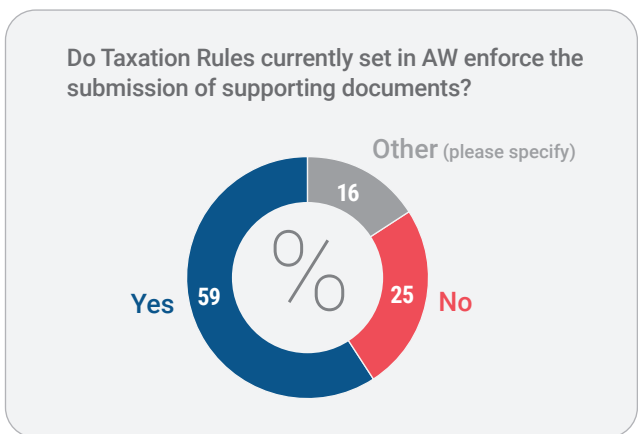
Very few respondents (9%) make use of the AW scanned documents feature for Excise declarations.

Additionally, a high percentage of respondents (48%) mandate the requirement for both the electronic Customs declaration and supporting documentation to be submitted as hard copies.



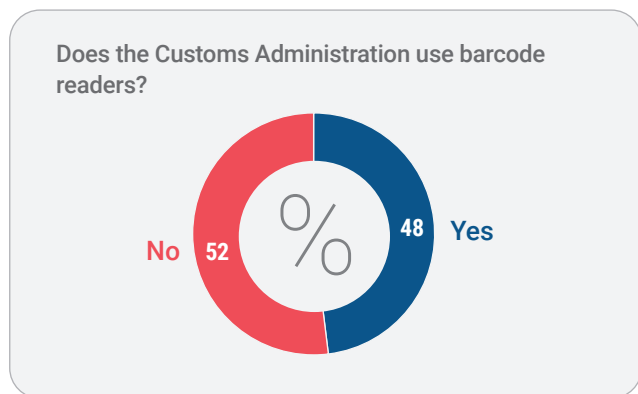
### Taxation Rules

The survey underscored the dire need for Customs Administrations to reconfigure taxation rules in order to mandate the submission of supporting documents. A non-enforcement in this category of 16% is much too high to adequately support a fully automated/paperless environment.



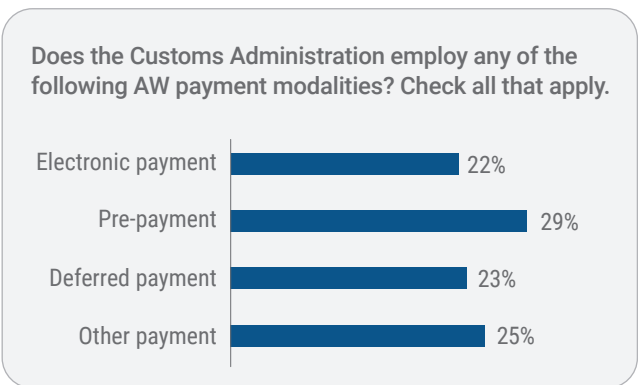
### Use of Barcode Readers

The survey revealed that less than half of administrations (52%) require the use of barcode readers.



### AW Payment Modalities

A few respondents take advantage of key trade facilitation and revenue enhancement AW modalities. e-Payment (at 22%) and deferred payment (at 23%) are seldom used as payment options.



*“Traditional payment in cash or check”*

*“In the stage of testing with banks for the electronic payment”*

*“The GRA is currently in the process of finalizing the Electronic Payment Facility for Piloting”*

*“Payment using the swipe machine for the bank card or credit card”*

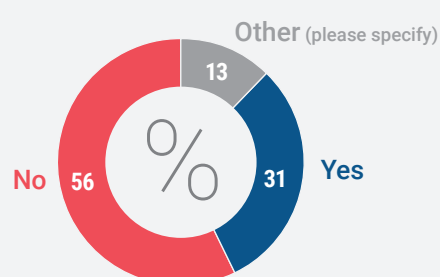
*“Deferred payment is used in specially authorized circumstances for example - Post Office.”*

*“We are in the process of e-Payment. We are waiting for national e-Payment gateway solution.”*

## Online Release Orders

The majority of Customs Administrations (56%) do not mandate the use of online release orders by declarants.

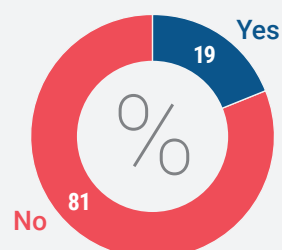
Does the Customs Administration allow declarants to generate the Release Order (online)?



## Automated write-off of licences, permits and certificates (LPCs) issued by other Government Agencies

The majority of customs-centric Single Windows based on AW (81%) do not auto-write off other Government Agencies (OGAs) LPCs.

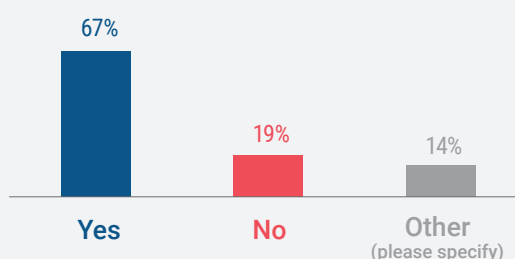
If the country has implemented a Single Window System, does AW electronically consume (automated write-off) licences, permits and certificates issued by other Government Agencies?



## Electronic submission of waybills

A high percentage (67%) of carriers use AW to submit cargo declarations. There is therefore a dire need of a strategy to bring the remaining carriers on board to use AW.

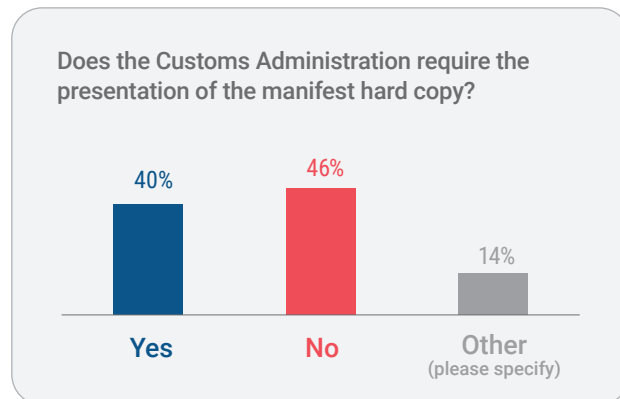
Do carriers/agents submit manifests and waybills electronically to AW?





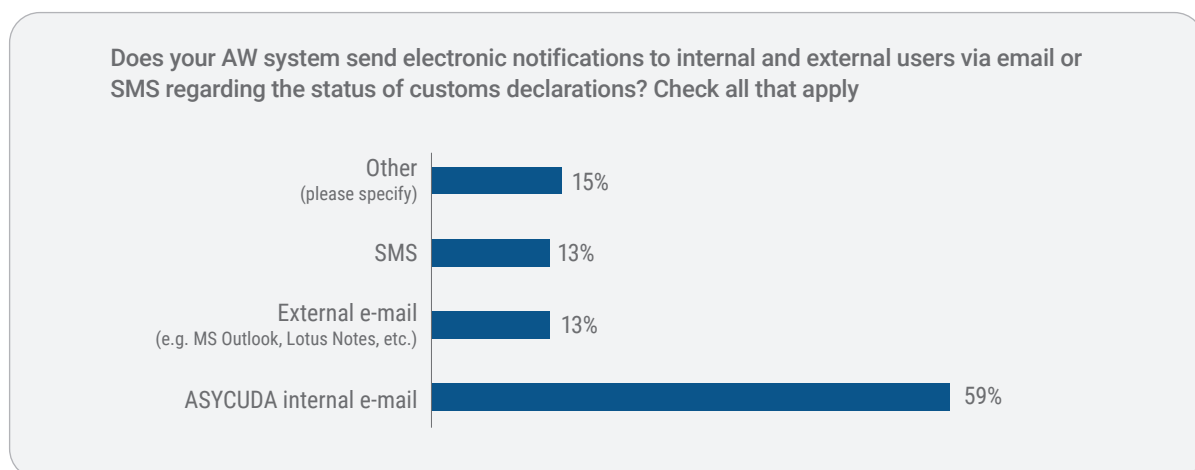
## Request of hard copies of manifests

A high volume of Customs Administrations are still requesting hard copies of manifests (40%).



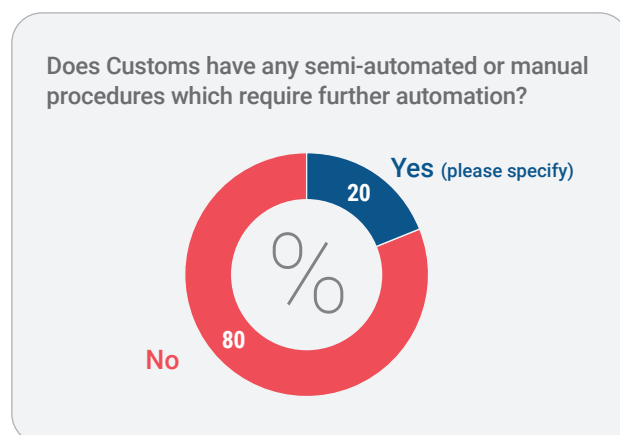
## Electronic Notifications

Notwithstanding that most respondents are utilizing the internal email facility available within AW, it is highly recommended that a further survey should be sent to respondents to determine why 13% of them are still using external mail for AW declarations' status. A 100% use of internal email of AW should therefore be pursued.



## Status of Automation

The graph on the right illustrates that there are still semi-automated and manual processes to be fully automated.



# SAMPLE RESPONSES

- "Passenger clearance"*
- "TRIPTIC Taxation, Import License"*
- "Passengers halls, land manifest, licenses and permits"*
- "Post Clearance Audit and automating post notes"*
- "We want to use APIS and the Exemption Modules"*
- "Warehouse management, e-query (semi-automated)"*
- "Risk management functionality"*
- "Duty free sales monitoring, non-commercial SAD declarations"*
- "Query and Amendment"*
- "Warehouse stock management, Exemptions management, Duty remission, Appeals management"*
- "Amendments to the Manifests; items that receive treatment under specific Customs Procedures"*
- "Temporary admission of foreign registered vehicles (travellers)"*
- "e-Query"*
- "Fiscal Incentives, Refund Process"*
- "C25 permit to move Cargo"*
- "Permit to remove goods prior to entry"*
- "New AW version should be able to address these. It is a matter to administratively decide to use automation".*
- "Seizures, Temporary Importations (Deposits), Air to Sea procedures, Excise, Auction sales, Clearing Agents Licence"*
- "Officer work done and warehouse inventory"*
- "Physical check export form / receipts of fines for manifest amendments (will be in the past when using 4.2.2) / trip ticket for vehicles crossing the boarders / Tally of Cargo at arrival by Customs"*
- "Asking hard copy of invoice, packing list, country of origin certificate"*
- "C25 (Movement Document) , Application of fines and penalties, notification of release when profiled"*
- "The account view of the payment that has been done at a bank".*
- "Tallying and reconciliation of cargo to be placed in Temporary Storage Facilities"*
- "NNSW and AW integration, and many more modules still pending payment process, notification of access changed or created, automation of fees (manifest)"*
- "Clearance Process, Manifest Submission, Valuation, Preferential Tariff Verification, PCA Process, Case Management"*
- "Calculation related to Penalties"*
- "Manifest module modification, SMS integration, Harbour vessel moments, Importer registration automation.*
- Electronic payment"*
- "Electronic payment of duties in real time, Customs decision module"*
- "Warehousing"*
- "Automatization data between Border Agencies and relevant information. For example Administration of Pre-Arrival data information from Neighbor countries".*
- "Licensing, Drawbacks"*
- "1. Partial payments are done manually; 2. Management and disposal of seized goods; 3. Collection of pro rata duties and taxes of consignments previously cleared under concession of which the conditions of the concessions have been breached 4. Relocation of consolidated cargo to Customs controlled areas; 5. Licensing of Customs Controlled areas and Brokers; 6. Issuance of certificates of Country of Origin"*

---

*"Plan for the year 2021"*

*"It is allowed to brokers"*

*"There is automatic assessment"*

*"This will be fully implemented at the start of the TTP in addition to Voluntary Disclosure by the traders"*

*"When vehicle enters the yard operator and found SAD registered, then auto assessed depending upon configuration"*

*"Self-Assessment Project is in progress"*

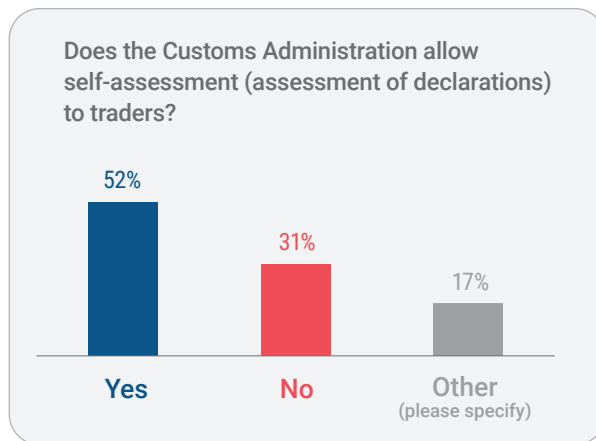
*"Green Declarations are auto-assessed"*

*"Before payment"*

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## Self-assessment

A high percentage of respondents (31%) are not using self-assessment. This is reflective of non-compliance/low trade facilitation.



## HS Indicative List

The survey illustrated that the HS Indicative list use was moderately low (60%). This may have been due to the early stage of the pandemic. This should have accelerated by now and it would therefore be useful to establish the level of usage at this juncture.

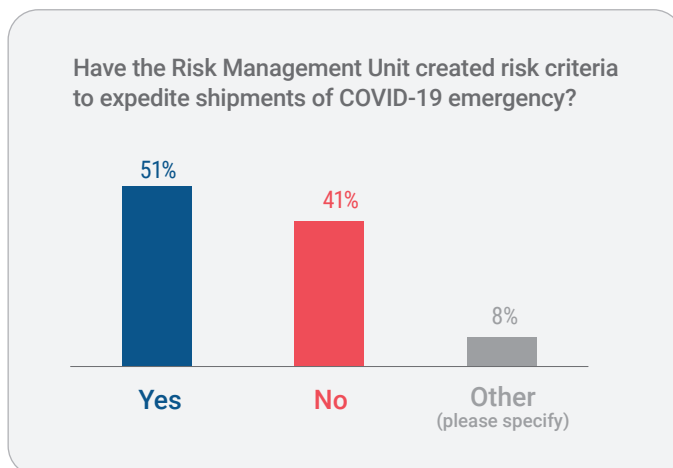




# Trade Facilitation

## Risk Management

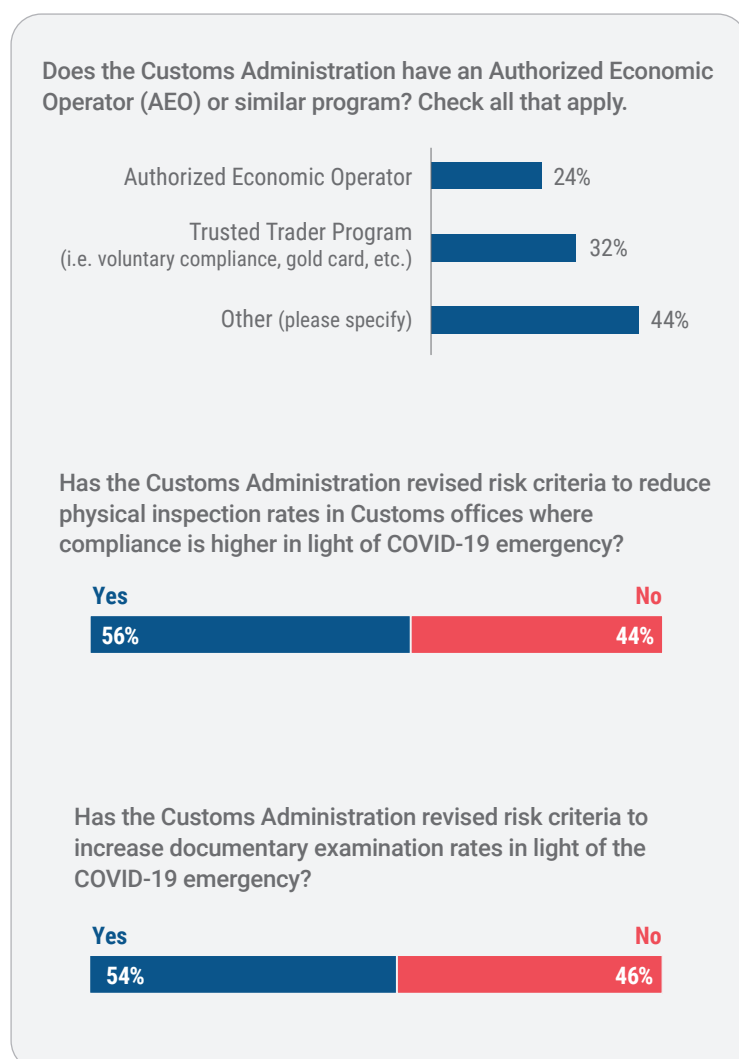
The Risk Management Unit (RMU)'s creation of criteria to expedite shipments of medical supplies is unacceptably low at 51%. This maybe reflective of a dysfunctional or a non-existent RMU.



## Trusted Trader/AEO Programmes

With only approximately 56% of respondents indicating the presence of either an Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) or Voluntary Compliance Programme (VCP) facility, it appears that there is much work yet to be accomplished as it relates to the use of such programs to promote trade facilitation and risk management.

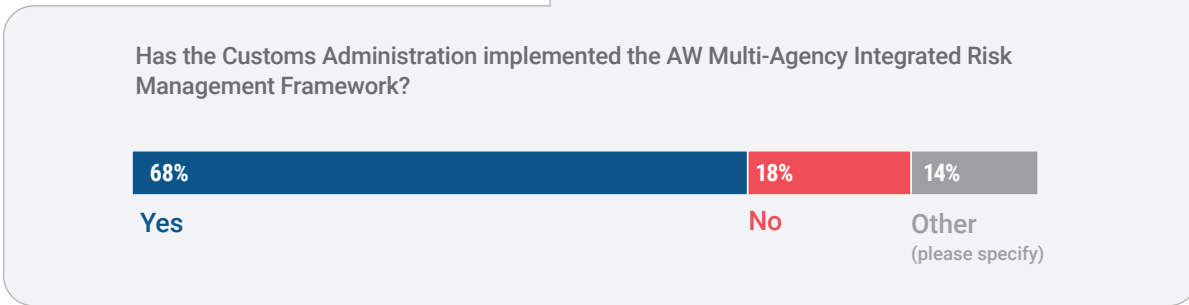
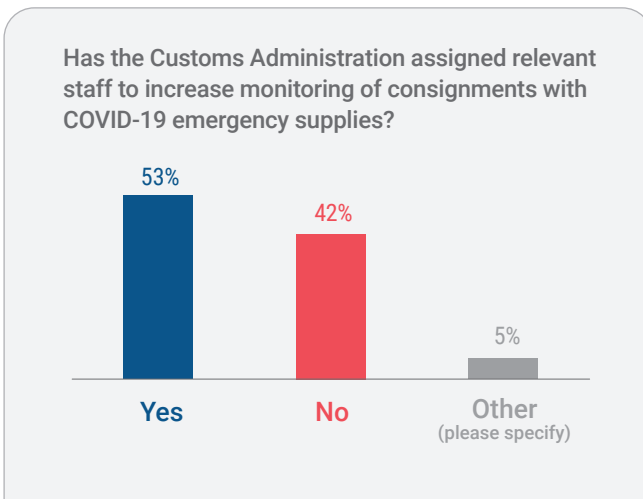
Customs Administrations should be urged to revise their selectivity criteria to increase their use of documentary check and to urgently revise risk criteria to reduce physical inspection in these Customs areas where compliance is higher due to this emergency environment.



## COVID-19 Medical Supplies Monitoring

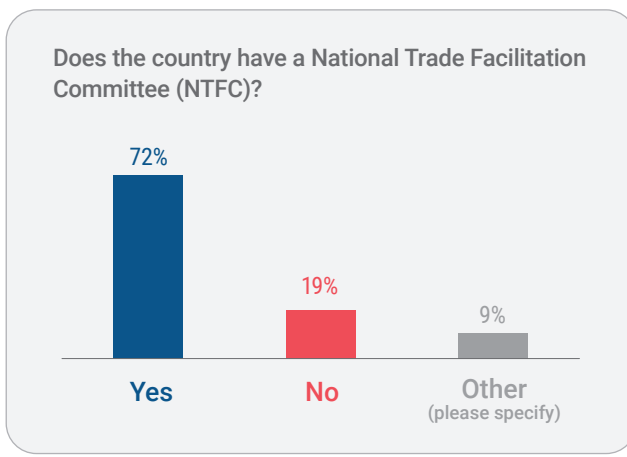
As illustrated on the right, insufficient staff have been assigned to increase the monitoring of COVID-19 emergency consignments.

The use of AW multi-agency Integrated Risk Management Framework at 68% should be improved.



## National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC)

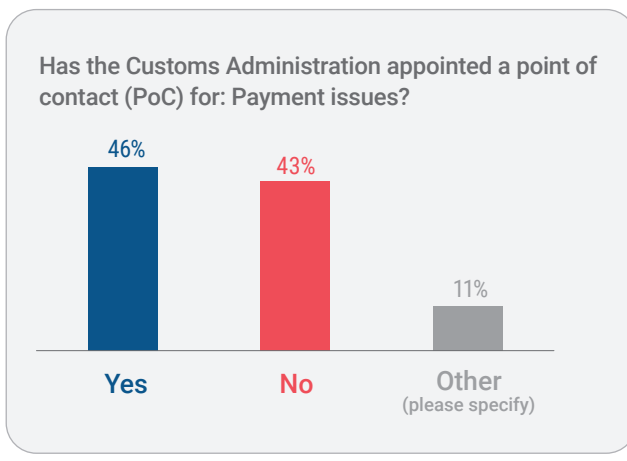
With a quarter of all respondents still not having a NTFC in 2020 shows that there are still significant efforts to be made.



## Point of Contacts

A significant lack of point of contacts for payments (46%) is observed.

Point of Contacts is limited and reflects a general lack of communication strategy as well as low transparency.



Has the Customs Administration appointed a point of contact (PoC) for the following topics?  
Check all that apply.

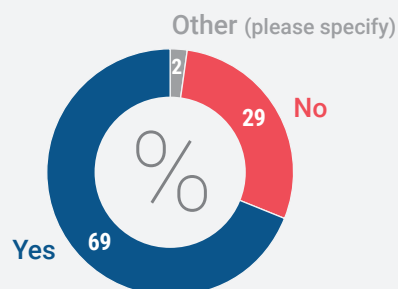


## Rotation of Staff

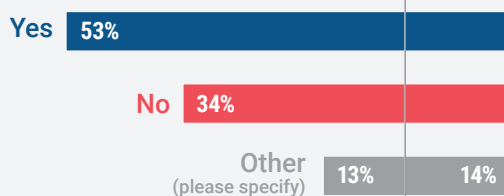
Most respondents stated that designated staff from OGAs work in high-risk areas of COVID exposure (which is quite alarming).

The rotation of Customs critical staff is also alarmingly low (53%). This pattern is similar for Other Cross-border agencies (48%).

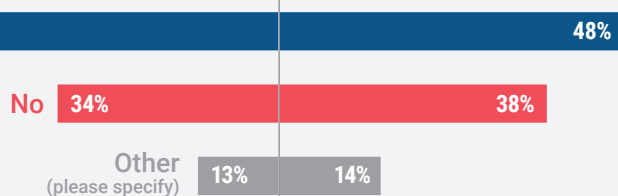
Have other cross-border agencies designated staff to work in areas where there is higher risk of COVID-19 exposure?



Do Customs Staff working on critical areas rotate on a weekly basis?



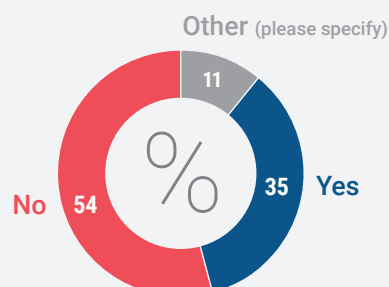
Do other cross-border agencies's staff rotate on a weekly basis?



## Centralized Document Check

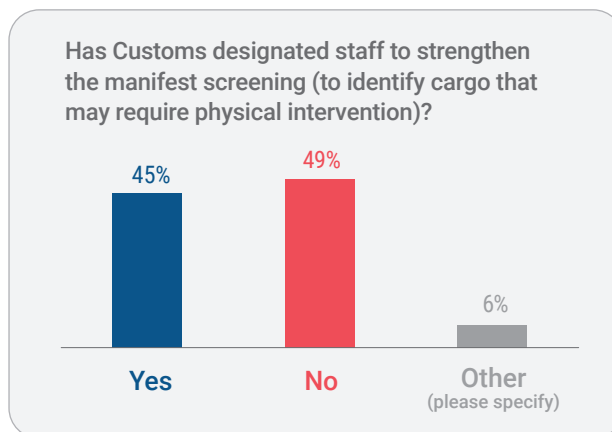
Centralized documentary check is low (54%); such a critical organizational reform should be encouraged.

Has Customs setup a Central Processing Unit for a centralized documentary examination nationally and regionally (where applicable)



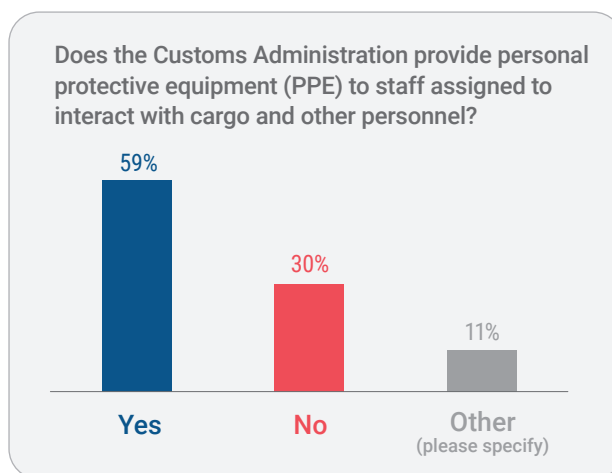
## Manifest Screening

Respondents indicated very little manifest screening (45%). This poses a potentially high risk to health and national security.



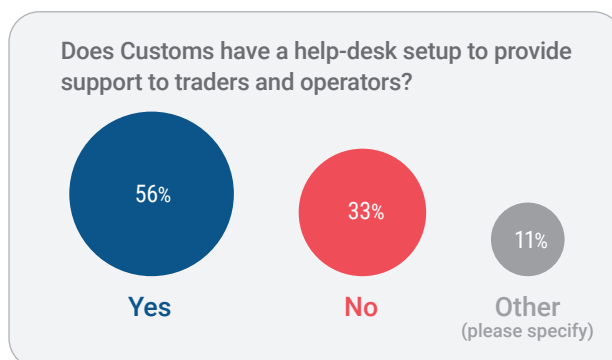
## Access to PPE for Staff

Only 59% of staff interacting with cargo and other trade personnel are provided of PPE. Placing other staff at high risk of health.



## Help Desk

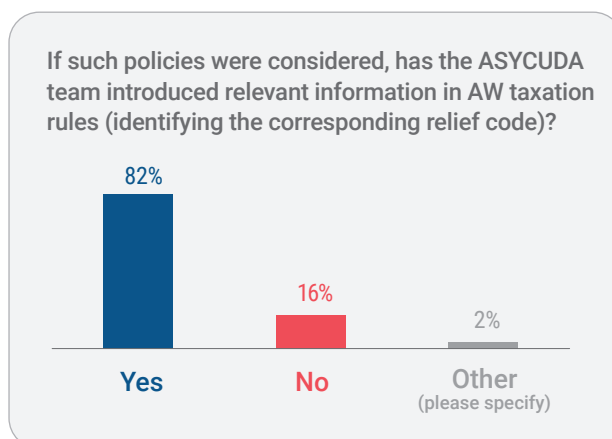
The establishment of help-desks is only done in 56% of the responding administrations. This is inadequate and is indicative of a flawed communication strategy for most administrations.



## Tariffs on COVID-19 Medical Supplies

Respondents indicate that in the case of 82% of jurisdictions, government removed tariffs on medical supplies which is a very positive policy measure.

82% of jurisdictions reported that Customs changed AW taxation rules for the removal of tariffs. This means that 18% of respondents have been tardy on adjusting the system as per Government policy.

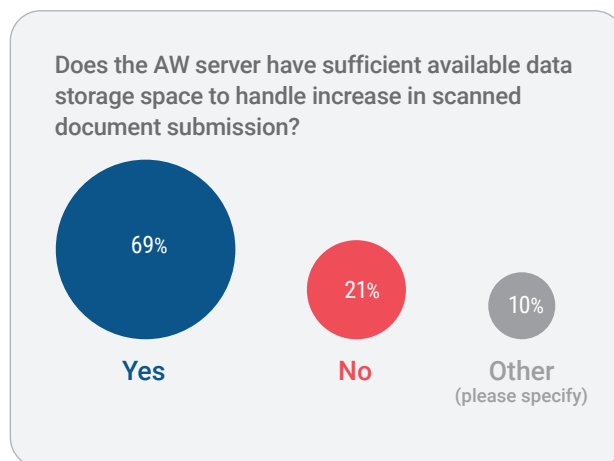




# Information **Communication** Technology

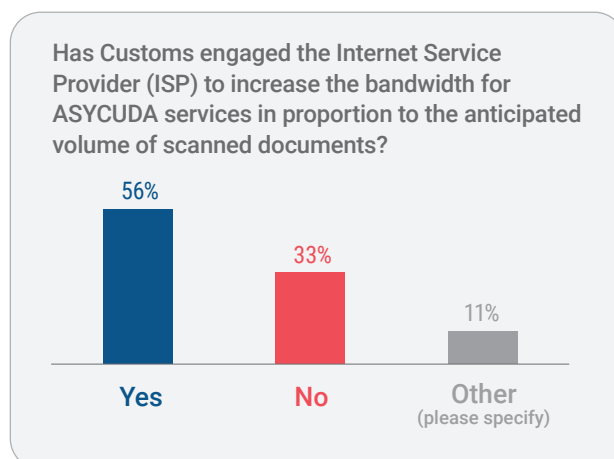
## Data Storage Capacity

The survey reveals that 69% of respondents have the required data storage capacity. This ideally should be closer to 100%.



## AW Services for Scanned Documents

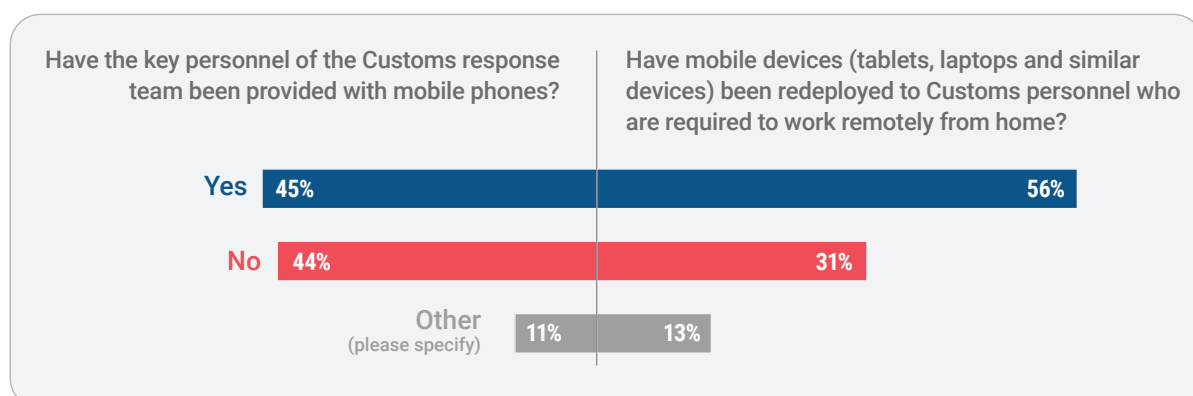
Only 56% of responding customs administrations use the AW scanned document facility.



## Use of Mobile Devices

Only 45% of respondents provide key personnel of the Customs response team with mobile phones.

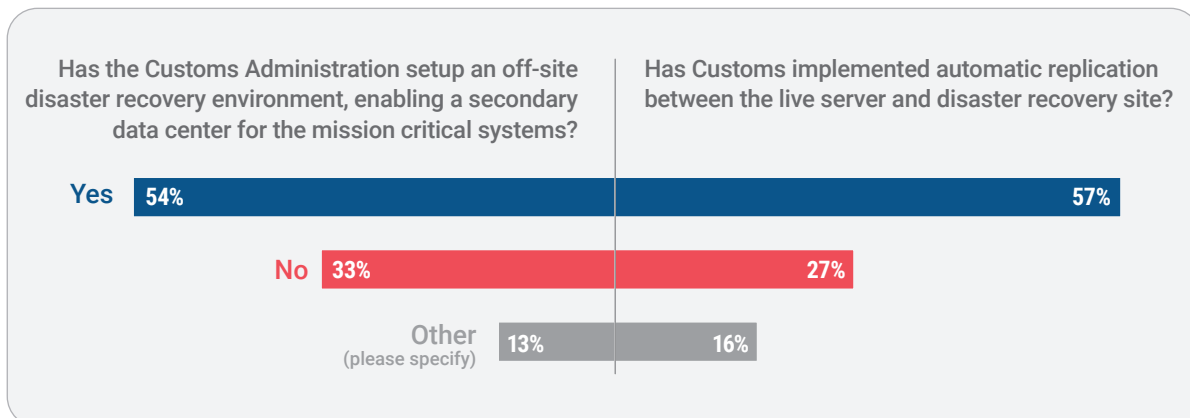
All respondents should ensure that they are provided mobile phones or subsidies for the use of personal mobile phones. 56% of respondents indicated that they redeploy portable devices to Customs personnel who work remotely. This is very low in such a pandemic environment.





## Disaster Recovery

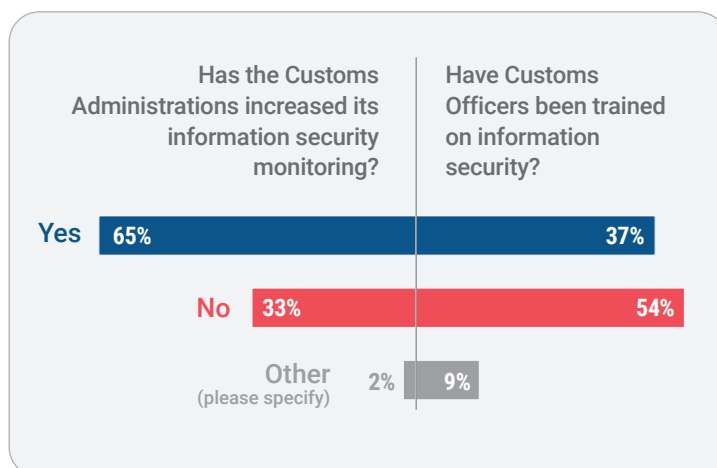
Only half of the respondents have Disaster Recovery and automatic backup in place. This is a clear and present threat that should be addressed as a matter of the utmost priority.



## Information Security

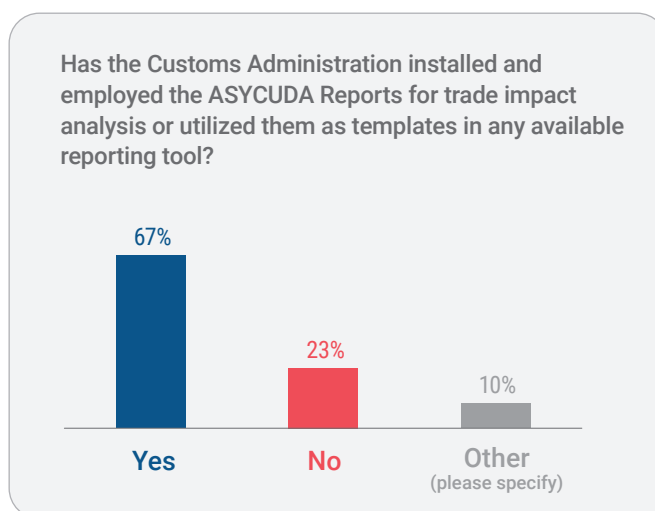
Information security monitoring is very low (65%).

The survey revealed an alarming lack of training of Customs officers on information security (37%).



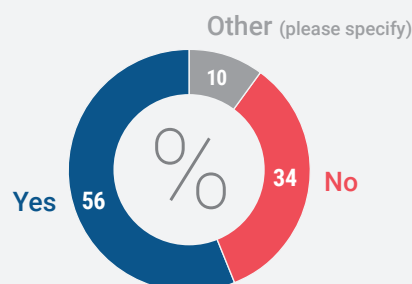
## Trade Impact Analysis

The installation and deployment of ASYCUDA reporting facilities for trade impact analysis is surprisingly high (67%) and is indeed commendable.

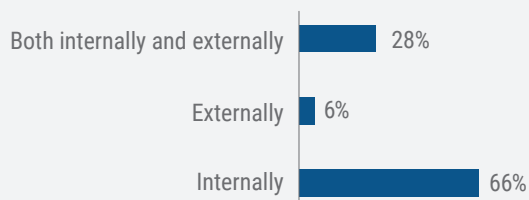


Only 56% of administrations perform daily and weekly analysis for crisis monitoring. There is also infrequent impact analysis, only 6% share the analysis externally.

Has Customs commenced performing daily and weekly analysis to conduct crisis impact monitoring?



If yes to above, has this analysis been shared:



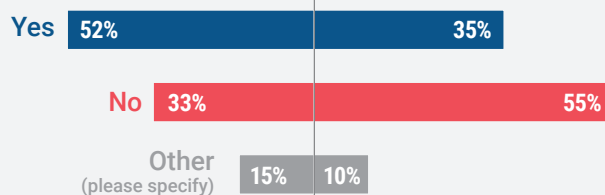
## Business Continuity Plans

There is a relatively moderate development of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) (52%) which is commendable.

However, BCP activation is too low (55%).

There is an acute need for BCP assistance with 46% of respondents requesting such assistance.

Does the Customs Administration have a Business Continuity Plan (BCP)?



If "no" to above, does Customs require assistance in developing a BCP?





## Recommendations

### A. Promotion of a paperless environment

1. International organizations and development partners should convene symposiums for jurisdictions which promote a more supportive political, regulatory and business-friendly environment by Government Border regulatory agencies.
2. Ensure that the legislative, regulatory and policy environments are sufficiently reformed and supportive of the use of e-Signature; e-Payment; e-Release and e-Notifications.
3. Promote the implementation of projects for customs-centric Single Window based on AW.
4. Business Process Re-engineering exercises should ensure that trade facilitation and simplification of trade procedures and documentation reforms occur **prior** to automation assuring in the process that complex and time-consuming trade procedures and documents are not automated.
5. Develop and implement Customs and Trade change management programs prior to automation and ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of change management strategies including the appointment and continuous engagement of change management champions.

### B. Trade Facilitation

1. Administrations should ensure the development and proper functioning of National Trade Facilitation Committees and the implementation of Trade Facilitation Programs.
2. Promote the use of a Trusted Trader Program (TTP) as a pre-cursor to AEO (which is more export-oriented).
3. Promote organizational reform in Customs to include units such as a Central Documentary Check/processing Unit, Risk Management Unit, Post Clearance Audit Unit and Trade Policy and Research Unit.
4. Promote more self-assessment by the trading community in their engagement with Customs and the OGAs.
5. Promote the development of Client Service Charters within Customs and OGAs.
6. Promote more private/public partnerships in trade facilitation strategies including greater consultations among private and public sectors.
7. Customs Administrations should as soon as possible implement AW Trade Portals.

### C. Information Communication Technology

1. Encourage Customs Administrations to increase their data storage capacity.
2. Convene regional workshops to promote development and implementation of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plans as well as other areas of ICT strategies.
3. UNCTAD should assist those jurisdictions who are yet to embark on trade impact analysis.



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