ASYCUDA Newsletter

UNCTAD

Division on Technology and Logistics

January 2019

Editorial

The ASYCUDA Programme would like to wish all our enthusiastic and devoted readers a happy new year. This Newsletter will update the ASYCUDA community on activities undertaken by selected countries in 2018 within the framework of implementing, enhancing and owning the ASYCUDAWorld system by the user-countries. It is also an opportunity for us to promote the publication of the ASYCUDA Case Studies, introduce the community to some ASYCUDA staff and highlight the most successful ASYCUDA official tweets of 2018.

ASYCUDA is UNCTAD's largest technical assistance programme. It is also a development programme. Indeed, the implementations of ASYCUDAWorld and ASYPM (ASYCUDA Performance Measurement - https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdtlasycuda2014d2_en.pdf) contribute to increasing economy competitiveness, streamlining customs processes and commercial transactions, increasing and securing revenue, enhancing South-South cooperation, reforming customs, empowering women, etc. In order to sensitize our community and readers on these non-obvious benefits of implementing ASYCUDA systems, we decided to draft and publish ASYCUDA Case Studies. For each case study, a user-country is taken as an example to illustrate a specific achievement. At the moment, 20 case studies are published on our website (please refer to the purple rectangle below for the address) and a few more are being drafted. This was possible thanks to the participation of user-countries' customs authorities which participated in the drafting and DTL who helped us with the design. We take this opportunity to thank everybody involved.

2018 saw the organization of two eCommerce weeks, the first one in April under the theme "Development Dimensions of Digital Platforms" and the second one for Africa in December. It explored among other things "the growing role of digital platforms and concrete steps to harnessing these evolving technologies for sustainable development". Governments play a major role in creating an inclusive digital environment and encouraging activity online by developing an appropriate soft and hard infrastructure to facilitate communication and transactions, creating and promoting specific regulations and development-oriented policies (SDG 8.3), and managing risks related to digital platforms. ASYCUDA assists governments in doing so by facilitating trade, ensuring an increase of customs revenue over the years, promoting the use of the latest IT technologies towards e-government, and in the automation of customs reforms.

In order to have a better understanding of the Programme's activities and scope, we invite you to travel around some of the projects underway. We will start with Vanuatu where a new ASYCUDA module was deployed for passenger arrival processing. We will then go to Guyana where the system was launched in 2018. Then, we will go to Kazakhstan where borders clearance and transit were fully automated. In Sri Lanka, Customs, with the assistance of UNCTAD, migrated the database operating system and the Java platform to open-source solutions. We will finish our travel in Africa where D.R. Congo Customs are consolidating their implementation of the system with specific developments, interconnections with other systems and capacity building.

Given the success of the previous publication of our Newsletter, we will introduce you to three ASYCUDA staff: one intern, one UN volunteer and one Information Systems Officer. We are also publishing the most successful ASYCUDA official tweets of 2018.

It is with great sadness that we learned of Peter James VUTI's demise. We have come across and worked with Peter numerous times because of ASYCUDA work related matters. He was such a professional yet humorous person and just a joy to be around with. He will be greatly missed. We share our profound sympathy with his immediate family, wantoks in Vanuatu and the whole of the Customs and ASYCUDA family in the Pacific.

We invite you to send any comments you might have to asycuda@unctad.org. You can also follow us on our official twitter account: @AsycudaProgram.

Please visit the "News & Events" section of our official website www.asycuda.org to consult and download our case studies and our previous newsletters.

ASYCUDA Programme,
Division on Technology and Logistics,
Geneva, January 2019.

Le Programme SYDONIA souhaite une bonne année à tous ses lecteurs. Cette lettre d'information vise à mettre au courant la communauté SYDONIA des récentes activités entreprises par des pays utilisateurs en 2018 dans le cadre de la mise en place, du renforcement et de l'appropriation du système SYDONIAWorld. C'est aussi une opportunité pour nous de promouvoir la publication des Etudes de Cas SYDONIA, de présenter quelques membres de l'équipe et de mettre en évidence nos tweets officiels ayant eu le plus de succès.

Le Programme SYDONIA est le principal Programme d'assistance technique de la CNUCED. Il est aussi un Programme pour le développement. En effet, la mise en œuvre des systèmes SYDONIAWorld et ASYPM (système de mesure des performances - https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdtlasycuda2014d2_en.pdf) contribuent à accroitre la compétitivité économique, moderniser les processus douaniers et les transactions commerciales, augmenter et sécuriser la collection de revenu, encourager la coopération Sud-Sud, réformer la douane, à l'émancipation professionnelle des femmes, etc… Afin de sensibiliser notre communauté et nos lecteurs sur les bénéfices non-triviaux de la mise en place des systèmes SYDONIA, nous avons décidé de concevoir et publier des études de cas. Pour chaque étude de cas, un pays utilisateur est cité en exemple afin d'illustrer un accomplissement particulier. Vingt études de cas sont publiées sur notre site official (veuillez vous référer au rectangle mauve ci-dessous pour l'adresse) et une poignée d'autres sont en cours de préparation. Tout cela a été possible grâce à la participation des Directions des Douanes des pays utilisateurs dans la préparation du contenu et de la DTL dans la conception. Nous saisissons cette opportunité pour remercier toutes les personnes impliquées.

2018 a vu l'organisation par la CNUCED de deux semaines officielles de discussions sur l'e-commerce. La première sous le thème « Dimensions de développement des plateformes digitales » a eu lieu en avril et la seconde pour l'Afrique a eu lieu en décembre. Elles mettaient l'accent entre autres sur le « rôle croissant des plateformes digitales et la manière d'exploiter ces nouvelles technologies pour le développement durable ». Les Gouvernements jouent un rôle majeur dans la mise en place d'un environnement digital. Ils encouragent l'activité en ligne par le déploiement d'une infrastructure informatique permettant de faciliter la communication et les transactions commerciales, la création et la promotion de régulations et de politiques de développement (SDG 8.3) et la gestion de risques relatifs à ces plateformes digitales. SYDONIA assiste les gouvernements dans leurs efforts en facilitant les échanges, en assurant une croissance des revenus douaniers au fil des années, en promouvant l'utilisation de technologies les plus récentes d'e-gouvernement et dans l'automatisation des réformes et processus douaniers.

Nous vous invitons à voyager avec nous à travers certains projets SYDONIA en cours pour une meilleure compréhension des activités et de la portée du Programme. Nous commencerons avec Vanuatu où un nouveau module SYDONIA pour le traitement des arrivées des passagers a été déployé. Ensuite, nous irons en République Coopérative du Guyana où le système a été mis en œuvre en 2018. En Asie, nous nous rendrons au Kazakhstan où le transit et les formalités de passage de frontière ont été entièrement automatisés. Au Sri Lanka, la Douane, avec l'assistance de la CNUCED, a migré le système de gestion de base de données et la plateforme Java vers des solutions open-source. Nous finirons en Afrique où les Douanes du R.D. Congo ont consolidé leur appropriation du système par le développement de fonctionnalités spécifiques, l'interconnexion avec d'autres systèmes et le renforcement des capacités.

Suite au succès de notre précédent bulletin d'information, nous vous présenterons trois membres de l'équipe SYDONIA : une stagiaire, un volontaire (UN Volunteer) et un expert informatique. Nous publions également les tweets officiels du Programme ayant eu le plus de succès en 2018.

C'est avec une profonde tristesse que nous avons appris le décès de Peter James VUTI. Nous avons eu la chance de travailler avec lui à de multiples occasions dans le cadre du Programme SYDONIA. Peter était un grand professionnel, doté d'un grand sens de l'humour et chaque moment partagé avec lui était un plaisir. Il nous manquera beaucoup. Nous sommes de tout cœur et exprimons notre sympathie à sa famille à Vanuatu, à la Douane et à la famille SYDONIA présente dans le Pacifique.

Nous vous invitons à envoyer vos commentaires à l'adresse suivante : asycuda@unctad.org. Vous pouvez aussi nous suivre notre compte official twitter @AsycudaProgram.

Veuillez visiter la section "Nouvelles et Evènements" (i.e., « News & Events ») de notre site officiel www.asycuda.org afin de consulter et télécharger les études de cas et les

Programme SYDONIA,
Division de la Technologie et de la Logistique,
Genève, Janvier 2019.

El programa SIDUNEA desea a todos nuestros fieles lectores un feliz año nuevo. Este boletín pretende informar a la comunidad de SIDUNEA sobre las actividades realizadas por los países usuarios en 2018 como parte de la implementación y mejora del sistema SIDUNEAWorld. Es también una oportunidad para nosotros de promocionar la publicación de estudios de caso del establecimiento de SIDUNEAWorld, presentar a algunos miembros del equipo SIDUNEA y destacar los tweets oficiales más destacados sobre el programa.

El Programa SIDUNEA es el mayor programa de asistencia técnica de la UNCTAD. De hecho, la puesta en marcha de los sistemas SIDUNEAWorld y ASYPM (Performance Measurement System - https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdtlasycuda2014d2_en.pdf) contribuyen a aumentar la competitividad económica, modernizar los procesos aduaneros y las transacciones comerciales, incrementando y garantizando los ingresos, fomentando la cooperación Sur-Sur, reformando aduanas, promoviendo el desarrollo profesional de las mujeres, etc. Para sensibilizar a nuestra comunidad y a nuestros lectores sobre las ventajas no tan evidentes del uso del sistema SIDUNEA, decidimos diseñar y publicar estudios de caso. En cada uno de ellos, se hace referencia a un país usuario con el fin de ilustrar un logro específico. Se han publicado hasta el momento 20 estudios de caso en nuestro sitio web oficial (consulte el rectángulo morado al final de este editorial para su dirección) y se encuentran en preparación otros más. Todo esto ha sido posible gracias a la participación de las autoridades aduaneras de los países usuarios que colaboraron en la preparación del contenido y la División de Tecnología y Logística (DTL) en el diseño. Aprovechamos esta oportunidad para agradecer a todos los que han contribuido en este proyecto.

El año 2018 ha sido testigo de la organización, por parte de la UNCTAD, de dos semanas oficiales de discusiones sobre comercio electrónico, la primera en abril bajo el tema "Dimensión de desarrollo de las plataformas digitales" y la segunda para África en diciembre. Destacaron, entre otras cosas, el "creciente papel de las plataformas digitales y cómo aprovechar estas nuevas tecnologías para el desarrollo sostenible". Los gobiernos desempeñan un papel importante en la configuración de un entorno digital que fomenta la actividad en línea mediante el desarrollo de una infraestructura informática tanto física como lógica para facilitar la comunicación y las transacciones comerciales, creando e impulsando una regulación y política de desarrollo (ODS 8.3) y gestionando los riesgos para estas plataformas digitales. ASYCUDA ayuda a los gobiernos en estas actividades facilitando el comercio, asegurando el crecimiento de los ingresos aduaneros año tras año, promoviendo el uso de las nuevas tecnologías de información orientadas hacia una administración electrónica, y automatizando reformas y procesos aduaneros.

Le invitamos a viajar con nosotros a través de algunos proyectos SIDUNEA en marcha. Comenzaremos con Vanuatu, donde se instaló un nuevo módulo de SIDUNEA para el procesamiento de la llegada de pasajeros. Luego nos dirigiremos a la República Cooperativa de Guyana, donde se inició la operación de nuestro sistema en 2018. En Asia, iremos a Kazajstán, donde el trámite de tránsito y paso de fronteras se han informatizado en su totalidad. Terminaremos en África, donde las aduanas de la República Democrática del Congo están consolidando el funcionamiento del sistema mediante la realización de módulos específicos, la interconexión con otros sistemas y el desarrollo de capacidad.

Tras el éxito de nuestro boletín anterior, presentaremos a tres miembros del equipo SIDUNEA: un becario, un pasante, un voluntario de Naciones Unidas y un experto en tecnologías de la información. Publicamos también los tweets más relevantes sobre SIDUNEA en 2018.

Es con un inmenso pesar que hemos recibido la noticia del fallecimiento de Peter James VUTI. Tuvimos la suerte de trabajar con él en múltiples ocasiones con relación a las actividades del programa SIDUNEA. Peter fue un excelente profesional, con un gran sentido del humor y cada momento compartido con él fue un placer. Le echaremos mucho de menos. Expresamos, de todo corazón, nuestras más sinceras condolencias a su familia en Vanuatu, sus compañeros de trabajo y a la comunidad de SIDUNEA en el Pacífico.

Esperamos que disfrute de la lectura de este boletín y le invitamos a enviarnos sus comentarios a la dirección asycuda@unctad.org. Nos puede seguir también en nuestra cuenta oficial de twitter @AsycudaProgram.

Visite la sección "Noticias y eventos" (i.e., News and Events) de nuestro sitio web oficial www.asycuda.org para consultar y descargar nuestros estudios de caso y nuestros boletines

Programa SIDUNEA,
División de Tecnología y Logística,
Ginebra, enero de 2019.

ASYCUDA Passenger Processing Module in Vanuatu

Vanuatu made history as the first country to extend the ASYCUDAWorld functionality to cover the primary line passenger processing with the development of a module that captures and stores data from the passport bio page.

The Vanuatu Department of Customs & Inland revenue (DCIR) has been using the ASYCUDA++ software since 1999 to support its customs clearance operations. It sought the assistance of UNCTAD for the deployment of the ASYCUDAWorld version. Project activities commenced in 2014 and the system was successfully deployed in Port Vila and Luganville on 11 July 2017 and 1st August 2017 respectively.

The number of travelers and tourists to Vanuatu continues to increase yearly. It contributed to 46.1% of GDP in 2017. Vanuatu Customs faced a situation where the manual processing of arriving and departing passengers had an impact on its mandate to secure the border and to facilitate legitimate travelers.
UNCTAD has worked with DCIR to customize and extend the functionality of ASYCUDAWorld to automate and support Customs border security functions. This cooperation led to the development of the Passenger Processing Module to capture passenger details and facilitate legitimate travels.

On 1 December 2017, Customs assumed the primary line responsibility of passenger processing at the air and sea ports, and DCIR requested UNCTAD assistance to develop a module in ASYCUDAWorld to automate this function. With input from the Australian Department of Home Affairs, the Passenger Processing Module was developed that included capabilities for:

• Interfacing with peripheral devices, such as passport scanners and webcams, to facilitate data capture of passenger details;
• Uploading of advance passenger information by the airlines;
• Capturing and automatic matching of pre-approved visa information, as required;
• Defining basic alert to flag travelers for referral to Immigration and other border and law enforcement agencies.

The module went live on 29 November 2018, almost one year after Customs assumed the primary line function. Since the official launch of the module (Pictures 1 & 2), an average of 795 arriving and departing passengers in Bauerfield International Airport are processed daily in ASYCUDAWorld.

Picture 1: ASYCUDAWorld Passenger Processing Module at Bauerfield International Airport

Picture 2: Ceremony for the official launch of the ASYCUDAWorld Passenger Processing Module

ASYCUDAWorld implementation in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

The Government of Guyana (GoG) in consultation with UNCTAD sought to provide a more reliable and efficient service to the public, government agencies, trade operators and other stakeholders. The ASYCUDAWorld (AW) system was therefore accepted as an adequate solution for the customs administration with its desirable features of interoperability, user-friendly interface, functionality and manageability. Accordingly, the ASYCUDAWorld project document was signed in August 2017.

Implementation activities commenced in earnest from October 1st, 2017 with an UNCTAD technical review mission. A youthful, highly motivated and skilled 17-member National Project Team was appointed to spearhead the AW project implementation effort and was provided with comprehensive ASYCUDA capacity building. The implementation of a Change Management Strategy (CMS) was designed to support the change to the new environment. The implementation of this CMS included delivery of CM training to over 75 officers and facilitation of an ASYCUDAWorld Study Tour of the Guyana National Project Team to Jamaica to understudy their experience implementing the system. The technical infrastructure of GRA was enhanced to enable a more stable IT network. Trade-related legislation, regulations and customs procedures were revised. UNCTAD assisted GRA in the revision of the Organizational Structure which would support an effective and efficient implementation of AW. This exercise resulted in the provision of comprehensive training and formation

of some new units including the Risk Management Unit, the Post Clearance Audit Unit and a Central Processing Unit (Picture 4). Then, the AW Prototype was designed and configured in conformity with Customs laws and regulations and departmental policies as well as international best practices. After successful quality assurance processes, the AW Prototype was presented to the various stakeholders for review and to solicit buy-in.

Key Milestones have been achieved subsequent to the commissioning of the prototype. Over 200 officers and 300 Customs Brokers, Carrier agents and Consolidators have been trained in various AW modules. The AW e-MANIFEST was launched in May 2018 after a successful piloting in March 2018. The eSAD (Electronic Single Administrative Document) module pilot was implemented at the main Port of Georgetown on September 2018 (Picture 3) initially involving 25 top revenue paying compliant traders and thereafter expanded to include over 125 traders. As of 31 December 2018, there were 848 eSAD submissions in the AW live environment. The average clearance time for eSAD is currently 3 days whereas it was 6.5 days prior to the eSAD Pilot. Current customs Intervention rate for the eSAD pilot group stands at 5% (yellow lane and red lane).

Critical Success Factors thus far include:

- The full and sustained strategic support of the Government of Guyana and the Senior

Management of Customs to the above reform initiatives;

- Dedicated and highly motivated National Project Team;

- Comprehensive capacity building and skills transfer initiative supported by UNCTAD;

- Significant level of buy-in from the private sector.

Picture 3: First eSAD being paid into AW - Sept 2018

Picture 4: AW Post-Control Audit Trainees with UNCTAD's ASYCUDA facilitator Mr. Terence Leonard

Implementation of Secure e-Borders system component in Kazakhstan

In 2015, the State Revenue Service (SRC) of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan and UNCTAD signed a cooperation agreement for technical assistance and support on the modernization and automation of customs procedures, implementation of electronic declaration and capacity building for the implementation of the ASYCUDAWorld-based system called ASTANA-1. It includes the implementation of SRC Secure e-Borders system component to increase automation of transit and border clearance processes by:

- Increasing the use of advance electronic information to facilitate the pre-arrival processing and expedite the release of goods upon arrival;
- Reducing the number of documents and eliminating redundant information required for the purpose of opening of transit;
- Increasing effectiveness of Customs controls performed at the border;
- Improving coordination with other government agencies in respect of border controls;
- Assisting traders to easily comply with relevant legal requirements while ensuring an adequate degree of control.

The implementation of this module needed a large-scale business transformation with the definition of an end-to-end electronic processing of information from submitting Pre-arrival Information and generating e-Transit document to validating the electronic Temporary Storage Document. Automatic reconciliation of data for seamless flow of information is required.

A trade-off was found between trade facilitation and control. Special equipment to receive and process data from results of technical controls (e.g. e-GATE/ANPR, weighbridges, X-Ray/Radiation equipment and surveillance cameras) were integrated in the solution. The module was developed and implemented to improve coordination with border agencies in terms of controls and information exchange and to facilitate interventions by the integration of Other Governmental Agencies (OGAs). Enhanced risk management techniques were also applied at different stages of the transit (before arrival and upon arrival).

Interfaces were developed and implemented for the automatic exchange of information with the National Railway Company and IRU (International Road Union).

The solution was conceived to assist traders in complying with legal requirements (SMS and internal/external email alters and notifications about the status of documents during the movement, the mandatory documents to be presented upon arrival and possible interventions of OGAs).

Customs and OGAs are also notified in case of non-submission of information within the time-limits, delay in transit, excess or shortage of goods, expired time-limit for goods to stay in temporary storage… allowing a better monitoring of customs procedures to minimize fraud and protect financial and economic interests.

The ASTANA-1 Secure e-Borders system component is operational nationwide since 1 October 2017. After a few days of implementation, it "issued 1'157 declarations and the average clearance time was 16 minutes – this is four times faster than before", said Mr. Bakhyt Sultanov, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Budget Planning.

Picture 5: ASTANA-1 Secure e-Borders presentation to the EURASEC (Eurasian Economic Community) Customs Council in Almaty

Migration of ASYCUDAWorld IT environment in Sri Lanka

Late 2014, within the ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for Asia (ASMA) framework, a Support Agreement was signed between Sri Lanka Customs (SLC) and UNCTAD. Since then, SLC initiated integrating ASYCUDAWorld with Other Governmental Agencies (OGAs) and a fully integrated module was developed in the system to address the challenge of synchronizing the processes of the Tea Board and Customs and thus facilitate a strategically important export process.

In 2018, SLC and UNCTAD continued their cooperation to progress towards digitalization and integrating ASYCUDAWorld (AW) with other OGAs and private sectors. Out of the many developments and interfaces deployed, some should be highlighted such as the interfaces between SLC and:

- Terminal operators to automatically receive e-release orders;
- SL Standards Institutions (SLSI) to send Import permits electronically to ASYCUDAWorld for subsequent automatic write-off;
- ITMIS (Integrated Treasury Management Information System) project of the Ministry of Finance to electronically receive revenue reports;
- Department of Motor Transport (DMT) to exchange vehicle data;
- Commercial Banks to provide electronic import remittances.

One of the major initiatives from SLC in 2018, officiality recognized at the "LankaPay

Technnovation Awards 2018" ceremony (Picture 6), was the implementation of the e-Payment System, for which SLC received an award "*In appreciation of the pioneering role played by Sri Lanka Customs towards digitalization by facilitating online payments to its customers and introducing digital certificates for document submission. A bold move taken by a progressive government institution with a firm belief in using technology to enhance the services offered to the general public. We salute all those at Sri Lanka Customs for their contribution towards this ground-breaking endeavor amidst facing many challenges*".

However, the most important challenging achievement by SLC in 2018 was the migration of the live Customs automated system to the most recent version of AW and the database coupled with a complete change of operating system, shifting from Linux to AIX (IBM) and from Java JDK to OpenJDK 8.

This was a double challenge for both SLC and UNCTAD. Sri Lanka was the first ever ASYCUDAWorld country to go for the AIX operating system and OpenJDK (Open Java Development Kit, a free and open-source implementation of the Java Platform). SLC decided to go ahead with a full migration as opposed to a staggered migration as is the usual practice.

To maximize SLC/UNCTAD chances of success and minimize SLC system downtime and side effects of the migration, SLC first of all invested in the latest technology for the hardware and

equipment and setup a state-of-the-art data center within their own environment (Picture 7).

The very first step of the migration was concluded (12 September-3 October) with a new AIX server successfully installed and configured to work with OpenJDK 1.8 and AW latest version but also with a full backup procedure deployed and tested on a new server allowing SLC to revert at any time to the exiting AW.

After a month of testing of the new environment by the AW ICT support team seconded by the ASYCUDA resident and reported issues resolved on site or remotely, the migration itself took place on Saturday 17 November. Allocated downtime was from 2:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. From 19 November, SLC Customs automated system reached cruising speed with excellent results in terms of the transaction count and performance.

Such an upgrade is always accompanied/followed by a time of fine-tuning and this was no exception. However, as a result of tireless efforts from all, issues were quickly resolved and from November 22 onwards, no more issues were faced and SLC validated the migration and new environment.

UNCTAD deployed 4 experienced and knowledgeable staff from 14th November to 12th December to support SLC.

Such a migration was a unique opportunity for everyone to test the ASYCUDAWorld platform on the AIX operating system but also using OpenJDK and to therefore, develop and build expertise that could serve any countries which may consider the use of OpenJDK if/when Java JDK will start having a financial cost.

Picture 6: LankaPay Technnovation Awards 2018 to SLC

Picture 7: Sri Lanka Customs Server Room

Consolidation of the implementation of ASYCUDAWorld in D.R. Congo

In February 2011, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Customs Authority of D.R. Congo (DGDA – Direction Générale des Douanes et Accises) and UNCTAD. The project, which was funded by the European Union, consisted in modernizing the IT environment of the Customs Authority by implementing ASYCUDAWorld. In April 2015, a new ASYCUDA Project, funded by the Government of D.R.C., was signed to consolidate the implementation of the latest version of the ASYCUDA system.

3 development objectives were identified for this project:

- Assist DGDA in increasing the economy competitiveness nationally, regionally and internationally;
- Smoothen and streamline commercial transactions;
- Improve the electronic governance in order to secure customs revenue.

In addition to these 3 development objectives, the project aims at reinforcing the institutional capacity of customs, implementing simplified procedures of customs clearance, strengthening the capacity at border offices and improving data exchange and transparency with the economic operators and the Other Governmental Agencies (OGAs).

15 additional customs offices have implemented ASYCUDAWorld exclusively, for a total of 32 customs offices using the system exclusively. Moreover, within the framework of the generalization of the Single Customs Territory (SCT) in Eastern Africa, 12 additional customs

offices in eastern D.R.C deployed the ASYCUDA transit module.

In terms of capacity building, UNCTAD experts delivered various ASYCUDAWorld Functional and Technical trainings (Basic & Advanced) to the national customs team in Kinshasa. On-site capacity building cycles were ensured thereafter by DGDA trainers in provinces of D.R.C. In total, 1'646 customs staff and economic operators were trained on the handling and configuration of the system.

DGDA have also benefited of the interconnectivity and possible interfacing of ASYCUDAWorld with other systems in order to increase the cooperation with OGAs and customs systems of neighboring countries. Indeed, many interfaces were developed and deployed in 2017-2018 to allow data exchange between ASYCUDAWorld and the IT systems of the Congolese Control Authority (OCC – Office Congolais de Contrôle), the Transports and Ports Company (SCTP – Société Congolaise des Transports et Ports), the Tax Authority (DTI – Direction des Impôts) and the Single Window for trade system. An interconnection of the D.R.C ASYCUDAWorld system with the Tanzanian automated customs system was also developed, tested and implemented during that period. In 2018, specifications for the interconnection of the ASYCUDA systems of D.R.C., the Republic of the Congo, and Zambia were prepared. The interconnection with COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) system was also developed and tested but has not been launched yet.

New functionalities of the system were enhanced and deployed in 2017-2018 like the valuation control module, electronic scanning of barcodes and excise declarations.
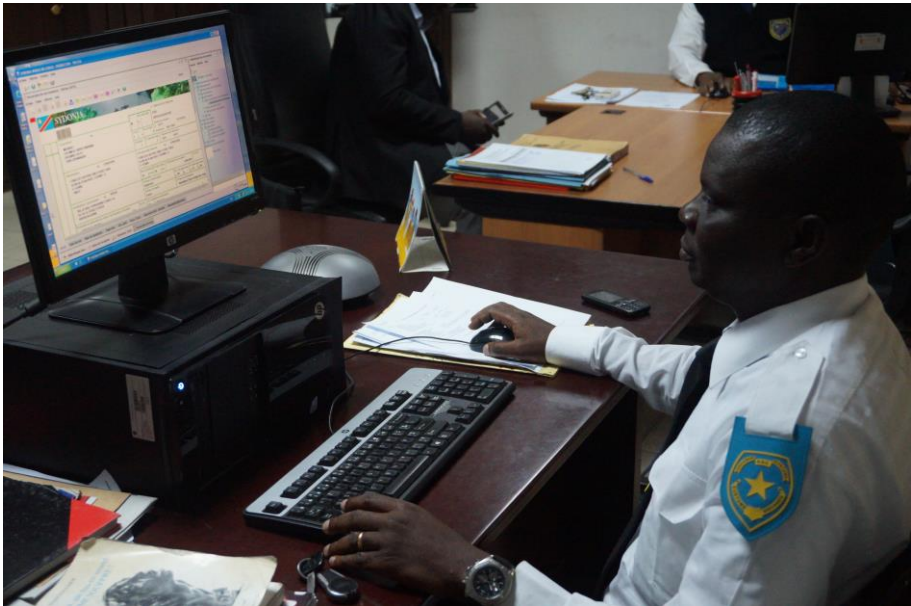
Picture 8: Customs Officer controlling a declaration at Kinshasa Airport

Picture 9: Customs Officers controlling goods at Kinshasa Airport

Introduction of some selected ASYCUDA staff

Fadoua SOUISSI
Intern
Geneva, Switzerland
Joined the ASYCUDA Programme in September 2018

"Since September 2018, I was offered the chance to be an intern for a period of 5 months within ASYCUDA's warm and welcoming environment. I was born in Rabat, Morocco. I come from a highly international background, having lived in Bangkok, New Delhi, Rabat, New York and now Geneva. I was able to develop an open mind, which further contributed to my desire in working in ASYCUDA's rich multicultural and diverse environment. I hold a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from the University of Geneva. My Master's degree will put a deep focus in fields related to International Public Law and Economic Law.

My responsibilities have been quite diverse at ASYCUDA. First and foremost, I have been researching and gathering data on more than 90 ASYCUDA user countries/territories, in order to prepare the upcoming ASYCUDAWorld Report, through research and communication with Project Officers on the field. I have also helped with the build-up and maintenance of an information repository on ASYCUDA user countries/territories. Furthermore, I have been working and designing ASYCUDA's Case Studies and performed translations from English to French and Arabic for all francophone and Arabic speaking user countries. I have also completed a translation into French of ASYCUDA's Project Document template between Customs Administrations and UNCTAD, for the deployment of ASYCUDAWorld.

My experience here at ASYCUDA has taught me the importance of teamwork, attention to detail and perseverance. At ASYCUDA, I was able to put knowledge into practice, through my understanding of the customs' clearance process, its technical vocabulary, how ASYCUDA contributes to trade facilitation, and through my awareness of ASYCUDA's transparency, conformity and compliance with international codes and standards. Thanks to my colleagues and our constant collaboration and efficient teamwork, I have been able to develop interpersonal skills, which have allowed me to communicate with clarity and diplomacy. Lastly, I feel very honored to have been part of a team that shares the same values, not only in terms of aiding countries that might be facing certain economic challenges but also coming to the realization that the work that we do here really makes a difference."

Maxim PEVZNER
ASYCUDA Programme United Nations Volunteer (UNV)
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Joined the ASYCUDA Programme in January 2019

"Having spent the past ten years working as a Software Engineer for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria, I have recently decided to join the UN Volunteers program. My first and current assignment is based at the UNCTAD Regional Office for Asia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, joining the ASYCUDA Programme.

During my time at UNODC, I contributed to a wide range of existing and new applications such as NDS (National Drug Control System), WebCMS (UNODC Content Management System), UNITE Contacts and UNODC ProFi Business Intelligence Suite, just to name a few. Under my guidance a team of three developers were able to develop a new Data Collection Module deployed in different applications to collect, index and analyze data. I am currently learning about the ASYCUDA software to support the team in resolving technical issues and developing new features for the ASYCUDA user-countries in Asia. I shall also participate in the development and improvement of the ASYCUDA website. With this new knowledge and the past experience I have gained, I believe I will be able to contribute to the ASYCUDA Programme to help making the world a better place with the enthusiasm, passion and spirit of volunteerism that I carry."

Muhammad KATTAN
Information Systems Officer
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
11 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme
15 years' experience in total

"I am Syrian by nationality, studied computer engineering at Aleppo University then got a Master's degree in CIS (Computer Information Science) at the Arab Academy.

I started my career in 2004 as an Oracle developer and Java programmer in the private sector before joining Syrian Customs in 2005, then UNCTAD's ASYCUDA Programme in 2008 as a National Consultant to lead the IT team of the ASYCUDAWorld project. I learned a lot from this experience, Syria being the 4th country implementing ASYCUDAWorld.

In 2012, I joined UNCTAD officially as International staff to implement and migrate ASYCUDA++ to ASYCUDAWorld in Kampala, Uganda for two years. I worked with a skilled IT team who became UNCTAD experts later. I also worked on a similar project in Mbabane, Swaziland which was a milestone in my life as the challenge was to switch to ASYCUDAWorld without pilot phase. In the meantime, I undertook many ASYCUDA technical support missions in Africa and Asia.

In January 2017, I was reassigned to the ASYCUDA Regional Office for Asia and Pacific in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where I provided support to the ASYCUDAWorld projects in Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Working in a regional office is different because I had to focus on various environments at the same time.

Being a United Nations staff has given me a chance to discover a lot of countries and be closer to the people by exploring their culture.

One of my dreams came true thanks to UNCTAD. I work in an international environment with kind colleagues who became close friends of mine. I always share my experience with others wherever I go. Nothing is impossible if you work hard to accomplish your goals. I hope I am leaving a positive impression to all the people I work with. I want my children to be proud of my achievements."

ASYCUDA Programme
@AsycudaProgram

Yesterday, the National Board of Revenue of #Bangladesh (#NBR) and the #ASYCUDA Programme agreed on extending their cooperation, aiming at strengthening the capacity of #NBR staff and developing new key modules on #ASYCUDA system.
@UNCTAD @UNCTAD_TLB @TrainForTrade

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 6 Feb 2018
Customs in #SolomonIslands collected more than 1 Billion SBD for the first time in history! The "improved efficiency comes from the performance of our people and their willingness and ability to embrace automation using #ASYCUDA system"
@UNCTAD

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 27 Nov 2018
An #ASYCUDA Passenger Processing Module Training for Immigration and Customs Officials of #Vanuatu started on 26 November.
@UNCTAD @TrainForTrade @V4NU4TU @UNCTAD_TLB #capacitybuilding

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 23 Nov 2018
Today is the last day of the 2-week #ASYCUDA Advanced Functional Training for an Angolan #Customs Delegation in Geneva. Congratulations to the participants!
@UNCTAD @AGTAngola @TrainForTrade #tradefacilitation

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 20 Apr 2018
Yesterday, The #ASYCUDA Programme presented the ASYCUDA Postal Customs Declaration developed in collaboration with @UPU_UN at the 4th edition of @UNCTAD's E-Commerce Week. The link to the presentation will be tweeted next week.

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 13 Dec 2018
#ASYCUDA System Migration Project closing ceremony in #Moroni, #Comoros after the successful implementation of #ASYCUDAWorld nationwide. We take this opportunity to extend our gratitude and appreciation to @DouanesC, @comesa_lusaka and @EU_Commission.
@UNCTAD @UNCTAD_TLB

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 5 Nov 2018
#ASYCUDA Advanced Training on #RiskManagement and #Selectivity from 29 October to 7 November in Kampala, Uganda to 10 officers from the Risk Management Division of @URAuganda.
@UNCTAD @UNCTAD_TLB @TrainForTrade

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 25 Oct 2018
Swaziland Revenue Authority starts deployment of #ASYPM; pilot site visits during mobilization workshop 22-26 October 2018.
@UNCTAD @UNCTAD_TLB #ASYCUDA #tradefacilitation #PerformanceMeasurement

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 25 Sep 2018
On September 21st, the first declaration (eSAD) was processed by @GRAupdates on the #ASYCUDA system live environment in Guyana. Congratulations to the national customs team and to @UNCTAD experts for the achievement of this important milestone!
@UNCTAD_TLB @ICT4DatUNCTAD

ASYCUDA Programme @AsycudaProgram · 14 Sep 2018
#Bangladesh National Board of Revenue currently implementing a full-fledged EGM (Export General Manifest) powered by ASYCUDAWorld supported by this video youtu.be/EfpaM4NLqcg
@AsycudaProgram #ASYCUDA #TradeFacilitation #UNCTAD