Vanuatu

ASYCUDA World Project

UPCOMING EVENTS IN AUGUST

1. CRMC 1st meeting to be convened.

2. Continue with scheduled tasks (see "Upcoming tasks" at the end of this newsletter).

UNCTAD Inception missions report received

CRMC to review findings and recommendations

Following the Technical and Functional missions conducted by the UNCTAD consultants in May and June respectively, the National Project Team has received the missions inception reports in July. The Customs Reform and Modernization Committee (CRMC) has been informed of the report. The National Project Team has considered the report and will be requesting the CRMC Chairman to convene a meeting this month to make decisions on the recommendations covered in the inception report. The decisions and considerations of the Committee will be revert back to UNCTAD.

The technical mission conducted in May was aimed to document and validate the developments on the technical front since the initial AW-readiness assessment mission in 2013. Furthermore, that mission was aimed to assist the National Project Team in installing the AW prototype server, which was successfully done, and to coach the NPT on prototype development requirements.

The Functional mission on the other hands was aimed to review and document the existing cargo clearance and related process in Customs, aiming to recommend standardized and simplified processes.

The overall aim of the AW project as stipulated in the signed

Project Documentations is to contribute to the Vanuatu Government goals of stimulating economic growth, through effective and efficient collection of revenue, and the provision of effective service to the trading community, and the capacity to monitor and provide accurate and timely statistics on international trade. On that note, the findings and recommendations of the inception report are particularly important as they would set the path to achieving the objectives of the project.

Therefore decisions to be taken by the CRMC in accepting and endorsing the recommendations are equally crucial in ensuring that the project objectives are achieved.

Functional training report received

Queries and additional functional requirements well clarified

The National Project Team and the CRMC have received the report of the Functional Training conducted in Suva in June 2016 by AW Expert Marianne Dumont.

The report listed the topics covered in the training and most importantly, it clearly responded to the queries raised during the training as well as responded to a list additional functional requirements from Vanuatu Customs.

Just a note on the additional function requirements that it is a list of which Vanuatu Customs has been maintaining since 2013 of additional Customs procedures and functions to be automated in AW as they are

not readily accommodated for in AW.

It is worthwhile noting that the inception report mentioned above, also addressed this list of additional functional requirements.

This Training report (and inception report) will therefore be useful working documents to guide the project team, and AW experts to successfully implementing the AW system in Vanuatu to meet our national requirements and expectation.

The NPT would like to thank Mme. Dumont for this comprehensive Training report.

Participants to the Functional Training in Suva, Fiji (June 2016)

Creation of system user profiles progressing well

ASYCUDA World like any computer systems that requires users to connect to and do transactions securely, has a compulsory component that needs to be well managed, and that is the user accounts. This month the National Project Team (NPT) has been working with Customs external and internal clients to document their current procedures and process. This Customs document is then compared with the findings of the functional mission conducted in June this year. In this process, the NPT seeks to find room for improvements on Customs procedures, smoothly enhance the trade facilitation in Vanuatu and at the same time protect our borders and maximize revenue collection.

With the above objectives, the NPT have commenced in creating user profiles and customer accounts and also give them the correct accesses. For our external clients, their user accounts are created to ensure confidentiality so that their transaction are not accessible by anyone else other than themselves and Customs. Similar work has been done for internal users (Customs sections) where users are restricted to their duties as per their job descriptions. For example a Cashier is a given access to receipt payments and does not have access to reroute an entry from Red or yellow lane to green lane for example.

The created user profiles and customer accounts are currently going through internal testing and fine tuning. The testings will run for the next month or so, during the creation of user guides and during the functional trainings for all users, until all parties are satisfied with their accesses to the system. This is a major task of the project and the NPT is particularly satisfied with the progress made so far.

Electronic Single Window system updates

Despite the Electronic Single Window System (ESWS) project being the second phase of this trade/modernization project to commence in 2018, efforts have continued to progress to ensure this project becomes a reality for Vanuatu.

After a two long years, the drafted ESWS project paper was finally submitted to the National Trade Development Committee (NTDC) for endorsement and approval. The NTDC has approved in its meeting in July for the project to be submitted to UNCTAD and the proposed donor for their consideration before final submission. The paper is now with UNCTAD and the donor for their views.

On the other hand, as part of Customs capacity building efforts towards the introduction of the ESWS, the NPT Manager was sent to attend two separate regional workshops in Fiji in July. The first workshop was on the IMO Maritime Single Window system. A system which Vanuatu is determined to include in the ESWS environment to facilitate trade, while the second workshop was on the OCO Regional Executive Workshop on the Single Window concept of which the NPT Manager attended with Director DCIR.

Minister MFEM signs SOClass COM paper

The process of acquiring the middleware software, SOClass, has approached its final stages after being approved by the Government Central Tender Board (CTB). State Law Office (SLO) was also consulted on the legality of the proposed purchased agreement to be signed between DCIR and the software providers. The final leg of the hurdle is to get the Council of Ministers (COM) to approved the sole sourcing of the middleware as recommended and advised by the CTB and SLO respectively.

The prepared COM paper is to be signed by both the Prime Minister, Honourable Charlot Salwai, as Minister in charge of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and Honourable Gaetan Pikioune, Minister responsible for Customs.

So far Minister Pikioune has signed the COM paper and it is now at the Prime Ministers office for his signature before submission to the Development Committee of Officials (DCO) prior to being tabled at COM.

Once this COM paper is signed, OGCIO may commence with the purchase of this middleware software for the ASYCUDA World Production and Development servers.

On other news, the DCIR Executive and Management have submitted the final payment for the ASYCUDA World project to the Ministerial Budget Committee (MBC) as a National Project Proposal (NPP) for 2017.

The payments for the SOClass licenses and the ASYCUDA World final payment should conclude the final payments required for the completion of the ASYCUDA World project.

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The ASYCUDA (Automated SYstem for CUstoms DAta) software, used by over 90 Customs Administrations around the World, was developed by the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD). An earlier version of ASYCUDA called ASYCUDA++ was implemented in Vanuatu in 1999.

ASYCUDA++ is a DOS based program with ICT limitations and therefore obsolete in this day and age. UNCTAD has therefore developed a web-based version of ASYCUDA known as ASYCUDA World. It takes advantage of the significant progress made in the field of ICT to provide improved automated support to the evolving requirements of both the Trading Community and Customs administrations.

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Upcoming tasks

The following tasks were identified by the National Project Team (NPT) and approved by the Customs Reform and Modernization Committee, as upcoming tasks in configuring the ASYCUDA World prototype server, the preparation and cleaning of the database, and the rolling out of trainings for internal and external users. They are brief tasks however involving large amount of work, giving the system an updated database from the current ASYCUDA++ setup. The tasks will not only involved the NPT, but the wider ASYCUDA World project team and Customs itself. Again, the scheduled date for the pilot site is still targeted for December 2016.

Tasks
Warehouse stock cleanup in ASY++ (in parallel with the work of the Warehouse Officers)
Inserting the HS2017 & supplementary units cleanup (in parallel with the work of the Tariff Committee)
Create SOPs
Creation and configuration of business units (Customer accounts)
User guide creation and Testing
System configuration
Reference tables update and cleanup (in consultation with CRM)
Taxation rules update and cleanup
Insert and update selectivity criteria
Conduct user trainings (internal and external)
Note: in each task there should be parallel testing between ASY++ and AW