



SINGAPORE AND AUSTRALIA SIGN ARRANGEMENT TO FACILITATE TRADE FOR CERTIFIED COMPANIES

REAFFIRMING RELATIONS AT THE 27TH MEETING OF THE ASEAN DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF CUSTOMS




Singapore's Director-General of Customs Ho Chee Pong (fourth from right) attended the 27th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs, during which the work of various committees and working groups was reviewed.

Singapore's Director-General of Customs Ho Chee Pong attended the Meeting, which took place from 2 to 4 May 2018 in Langkawi, Malaysia. The Meeting was chaired by Director-General of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department Dato' Sri Subromaniam Tholasy, and all 10 ASEAN Member States were in attendance.

Frontier Posts); the Terms of Reference of the Technical Sub-Working Group on Classification; and the commencement of a Feasibility Study on an ASEAN-wide Authorised Economic Operator Mutual Recognition Arrangement.

Mr Ho also co-chaired the 2nd ASEAN-Australia Customs Consultation with the Acting Commissioner of the Australian Border Force (ABF) Michael Outram on 3 May 2018.

On the sidelines of the Meeting, Singapore Customs held bilateral meetings with the delegations from the ABF, the General Administration of China Customs, and the Royal Malaysian Customs Department. Views were exchanged on enhancing efficiency of customs operations, customs collaboration, and strengthening cooperation.

Singapore Customs also held consultation sessions with the EU-ASEAN Business Council to discuss ways to simplify trade procedures for business, and the US-ASEAN Business Council on trade facilitation, to strengthen customs-to-business partnerships in the region. 

At the meeting, the Directors-General of Customs reviewed the work of the various ASEAN Customs' committees and working groups, and endorsed several key initiatives.

These initiatives included the list of Designated Frontier Posts to be annexed to the signed ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit's Protocol 2 (Designation of

EDITOR'S NOTE

The annual Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs took place in May, and Singapore's Director-General of Customs Ho Chee Pong attended the Meeting in Langkawi, Malaysia (page 1). Singapore Customs took the opportunity to hold bilateral meetings with several of our international counterparts, and had good discussions on customs operations, collaboration, and cooperation.

Also on the international front, Singapore and Australia inked a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) to facilitate trade on 31 May 2018 (page 10). This MRA signing signals both customs administrations' commitment to facilitate trade for certified companies, foster closer customs collaboration, and elevate bilateral trade ties.

Since the National Trade Platform (NTP) went live in December 2017, the ecosystem has been growing, and Singapore Customs e-services are now integrated on the NTP (page 2). Features like Permit Return and Single Sign-on have been introduced to make using the NTP a more seamless experience.

In Spotlight (page 6), we bring you through the process of how Singapore Customs brought a tax evader to task. A single case requires the cooperation of several branches, from investigation to prosecution. Officers involved in the case share their thoughts on their work.

Neo Wen Tong
Editor

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SELECTED CUSTOMS E-SERVICES NOW INTEGRATED IN THE GROWING NTP ECOSYSTEM

Permit Return, along with four other Singapore Customs e-services have been introduced on the National Trade Platform (NTP).

Business-to-Government (B2G) services are being progressively released on the NTP, in line with the platform's vision to be the one-stop national trade info-ecosystem, which enables electronic data sharing among businesses and the Government.

CUSTOMS E-SERVICES

From 20 June 2018, traders applying for certain certificates are required to submit their applications via the NTP to Singapore Customs. These include the Certificate of Non-Manipulation, Certificate of Free Sale, Import Certificate and Delivery Verification, and Landing Certificate.

Once the application is successful, Singapore Customs will deposit the certificates in the trader's Data Repository on NTP, upon which traders will receive a notification via the NTP Notification Inbox. The certificates can then be easily downloaded from the NTP or shared with business partners through the NTP from a trader's Data Repository. There is no longer a need to travel to Singapore Customs offices to physically collect the certificates, or manually share the certificates.

PERMIT RETURN

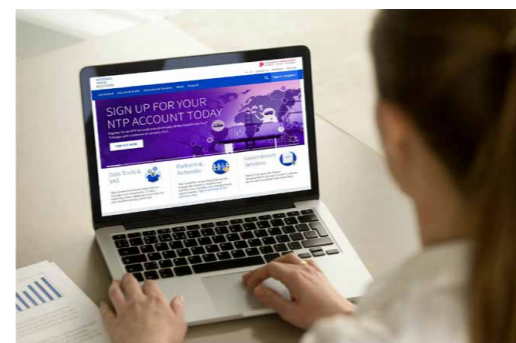
The Permit Return feature is also available on the NTP, and importers and exporters who subscribe to this feature can have access to their permits almost immediately upon approval by Singapore Customs. This will allow the importers and exporters to have timely access to their approved permits, share with their authorised partners, and reuse specific permit information for verification or compliance purposes.

UPCOMING: SINGLE SIGN-ON

Users of the NTP who use various Value-Added Services (VASes) will find the Single Sign-on function useful. The Single Sign-on will allow users to access the various VAS portals without having to log in multiple times. With no need to remember multiple user names and passwords, users will get a more seamless experience when they are on the NTP.

Register for an account on the NTP and enjoy the benefits of NTP such as the Data Repository and Document Exchange free till 31 December 2018. Sign up at: <https://www.ntp.gov.sg/public/accessing-ntp---corppass>.

The NTP went live in December 2017 and Singapore Customs has been engaging TradeXchange users to transit them smoothly to the NTP and to on-board new users and VAS providers on to the platform.



Join us – be a part of the collaboration!

We remain open to exploring opportunities with interested VAS providers. If you have any feedback or suggestions, such as datasets or Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that you would like to be available on the NTP, contact the project team at enquiry_NTP@customs.gov.sg.

National Trade Platform (NTP)

The NTP is a one-stop trade information management platform that facilitates and enables end-to-end electronic data sharing and workflow integration among businesses and the government across the entire trade ecosystem. It will replace the current TradeNet and TradeXchange. Visit us at www.ntp.gov.sg.

NEW VALUE-ADDED SERVICES ON BOARD

Value-Added Services (VASes) created by VAS developers and VAS providers form an online marketplace that showcases innovative services. These services are built on the NTP's open development platform to meet varied business needs, including business services that cut across adjacent sectors such as the provision of trade financing. As of June 2018, 17 VASes have come on board the National Trade Platform.

Blue Jay Solutions

Blue Jay Solutions provides front-end applications, which facilitate the transmission of trade documents for approval by the Competent Authorities and integrate the import, export and transshipment of cargo for non-dutiable, dutiable, non-controlled, and controlled goods.

GeTS (Permit Reconciliation Report)

Permit Reconciliation Report combines key shipment details declared through TradeNet and Advance Clearance for Courier and Express Shipment (ACCESS), allowing subscribers to download a single report consisting of all declarations declared under the trader's Unique Entity Number.

GeTS (Permit Preparation)

Permit Preparation enables shippers to transmit shipping information seamlessly from their internal systems to auto-populate the TradeWeb Live application for trade permit declaration purposes. Auto-population helps to reduce manual data entry by logistics service providers, improving data accuracy and resulting in faster turnaround for permit approvals.

GeTS (eCO Preparation)

eCO Preparation enables shippers and their authorised agents to reuse data from a Singapore Customs-approved permit to apply for non-preferential Certificates of Origin (CO) electronically. This enables agents to apply for the eCO for shippers faster and reduces data entry errors.

Nufin Data (NEMO)

NEMO helps businesses use their payables and receivables to fund growth, through digitising and automating processing workflows to improve efficiency, reduce operational costs, and provide better cash flow visibility. Processed orders and invoices can then be used to access or offer financing with funders on the platform.

Invoice Interchange

Invoice Interchange offers a fast and flexible form of invoice financing by allowing businesses to unlock cash flow in 24 hours on its online platform. Businesses can sign up, sell an invoice, and get funded without contracts, and can flexibly fund one or many invoices.

Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan provides syndicated research content covering industry, market, and technology trends in the trade and logistics sector. Their analysis covers areas from international trade agreements and industry analysis, to forward-looking analysis. Frost & Sullivan's experts are based globally to address any business research needs.

Innosys (Freight Master)

Freight Master is a suite of modular and integrated software solutions tailored for the logistics industry. Freight Master consists of five subsystems: Air Freight Operations, Ocean Freight Operations, Warehouse Management, Transport Operations for full-container load/less-than-container-load (FCL/LCL), and Multi-Currency Accounting. There are also optional software modules and services to further enhance Innosys' offerings.

SCF-G (Freight Payment & Audit)

The Freight Payment & Audit (FP+A) system is designed to automate the freight invoice auditing process on behalf of shippers and consignees. It is an integrated system, which collates, audits, reconciles, and analyses shipping-related charges, and provides decision criterion for payment.

HAKOVO

HAKOVO marketplace allows businesses to search for ocean freight quotes (FCL/LCL) from competitive freight forwarders and carriers, and obtain pricing using HAKOVO's Instant Quote. For special shipping needs, businesses can start an eBid request on the platform and service providers will provide a quotation within one to two business days.

TNETS

TNETS operates a customs declaration business in Singapore. The software is integrated with a range of logistics and supply chain technology solutions. From core enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and through forwarding packages to Warehouse Management Systems, TNETS is able to provide the interface to exchange customs information rapidly, securely, accurately, and cost-effectively.

VCC

VCC's permit preparation is powered by E-freight Suite v2.0. The e-freight @ Singapore programme helps to streamline processes and make paperless air cargo possible. Relevant data from source documents will be mapped over and permit declarations can be submitted with little to no data entry. Users can also track real-time freight information and generate reports easily.

Capital Match

Capital Match offers invoice and purchase order financing to support companies with working capital. Clients can decide which invoices to finance and funds can be disbursed within 24 hours for repeat clients and within one to three days for new clients.

VersaFleet

The VersaFleet Transport Management System allows businesses to manage their transportation operations by bundling order management, artificial intelligence-powered route optimisation, and real-time monitoring of driver task completion. Software-as-a-Service pricing model means that users can enjoy software without capital expenditure investment.

GeTS (CALISTA)

CALISTA reduces inefficiencies for the global supply chain by interacting with existing and new systems and applications of various stakeholders to streamline processes, documents, and data in the flow of goods within and across countries and regions. Stakeholders will benefit from the reduction of data duplication, automated handshakes across nodes, improved authenticity of data flow, and access to accurate and up-to-date status visibility.

GeTS (XBS)

XBS is a centralised global trade platform that facilitates cross-border trade with end-to-end compliance connectivity. XBS powers data management and transformation for trade declaration, and import and export permits applications to government agencies and trade associations globally. It also serves as a system of records for trade-related data and documents required for statutory compliance.

Deskera Singapore

Deskera is a smart cloud-based business management solution. It offers cloud-based software such as ERP, Manufacturing Resource Planning, Customer Relationship Management, Human Resource Management System, Project Management, and Learning Management System. 

ENHANCED REGULATORY REGIME TO COMBAT MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORIST FINANCING RISKS

Facilitation that Singapore Customs accords to traders includes allowing approved companies to store imported non-dutiable goods for an indefinite period of time in a designated area licensed by Singapore Customs, with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on these goods suspended. This scheme is known as the Zero-GST Warehouse Scheme (ZGS).

In the face of evolving security concerns, Singapore Customs has reviewed the ZGS licensing conditions and introduced new measures to enhance the ZGS regulatory regime.

Singapore Customs takes a serious view of abusing Customs' facilities for money laundering and terrorist financing activities. In view of the changing landscape, revising ZGS licensing conditions is a move the department has made as a trade regulator to enhance the integrity of the supply chain.

The strengthened measures apply to ZGS licensees storing goods such as precious stones and metals, works of art such as paintings and sculptures, antiques that are over 100 years old, and watches clad with precious metal casings or precious metals. These goods are otherwise known as listed goods.

The revised licensing conditions, which took effect on 1 January 2018, take on a three-pronged approach.

Firstly, ZGS licensees must now seek approval from Singapore Customs prior to storing listed goods. The licensees must also meet the mandatory

criteria for ZGS Type II and attain a corresponding "Intermediate" TradeFIRST banding, before Singapore Customs approves any such application.

Next, licensees are now required to obtain, maintain, and update information on the identities of both the person(s) with control over the listed goods (PC), and the person(s) with beneficial ownership over the goods (BO). This is in addition to obtaining and maintaining information on the value of the goods, and the identity of the customer who deposited the goods.

Finally, it is now mandatory for ZGS licensees to screen customers who deposit the listed goods, the PC, and the BO, against publicly-available databases for criminal activities (such as fraud and money laundering or terrorist financing activities), and for designation by the United Nations Security Council as a designated entity subject to a United Nations sanctioned regime. These licensees are also required to screen the listed goods entering their warehouses to ensure that they are not stolen goods. Such screening records should be maintained and updated.


In view of the new measures, customs officers

from the Company Compliance Branch conducted checks to ensure that licensees dealing in these listed goods are up to speed and complying with the revised licensing conditions.

On 3 and 9 May 2018, the officers conducted checks on two licensees at Le Freeport, Singapore, to check that the licensees' documents included now-required information such as details on both the PC and the BO. Photos of the goods checked were also taken by Singapore Customs officers for screening purposes.

The revised licensing conditions and inspections are part of the enforcement approach that Singapore Customs adopts against illicit trade, allowing Singapore to operate as a secure trade hub.

These measures will assist ZGS licensees in identifying and understanding the customers they are dealing with. Such identification could help prevent Zero-GST Warehouses from being inadvertently used as a conduit for money laundering and terrorist financing activities.

ZGS licensees that cannot meet the new requirements will not be allowed to store listed goods. 

1. Singapore Customs officers go through documentation prepared by the licensee to ensure all required information is present.

2. Art handlers unpack items that were pre-selected for checks, and re-seal them after the checks are completed.

Stock check at Le Freeport, Singapore

Listed goods require special handling. The Singapore Customs team worked closely with a ZGS licensee and professional art handlers to complete the inspection.



1



2



INVESTIGATION TO PROSECUTION: HOW SINGAPORE CUSTOMS BROUGHT A TAX EVADER TO TASK

Maintaining a level playing field for all traders is key in upholding Singapore's position as a trusted global trade hub. To ensure that errant traders do not tip the balance by contravening customs rules and regulations, Singapore Customs' Intelligence & Investigation (I&I) Division officers take firm enforcement actions against these errant traders.

The I&I Division, which is made up of seven branches, undertakes a range of enforcement functions from surveillance to investigation and prosecution. Officers enforce against offences under the various Acts – such as the Customs Act, Good and Services Tax Act, Regulation of Imports and Exports Act, Strategic Goods (Control) Act, and Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act – and their subsidiary legislation.

Solving a case requires seamless collaboration and commitment from officers across different branches. In 2017, Singapore Customs successfully cracked a case involving a parallel importer of motor vehicles, where the excise duty and GST evaded amounted to \$261,671.09 and \$109,901.85 respectively.

The case was first detected when an observant Singapore Customs trade officer noticed that two companies had submitted Declaration of Facts (DOF) to import the same set of five cars. A DOF, which indicates the transaction values of the imported motor vehicles, is submitted to Singapore Customs to determine the payable excise duty and GST.



Digital Forensics Unit Officer Tan Jee Yee uses tools to extract data for the investigation officers to examine.

Suspecting that it could be a fraud, the officer alerted the Trade Investigation Branch (TIB), and Chief Customs Officer (CCO) Farihullah Abdul Wahab Safullah was assigned to the case.

A check on the two companies and several other related companies and personnel led CCO Farihullah to Tang Luan Yew, the sole proprietor of a car import company, Teng Autosports Trading. To gather more information on the trade transactions carried out by the company, CCO Farihullah led a team of TIB officers to raid Teng Autosports Trading's office and Tang's residence on 21 July 2015. From the raid, the team seized multiple invoices, import documents, a laptop and a smartphone.

The devices were brought back for analysis by Digital Forensics Unit Officer, Chief Customs Officer (Special Grade II) [CCO (SG II)] Tan Jee Yee. The unit is a close partner of the investigation officers as they extract data and turn them into useful information to be examined.

"There is a lot of evidence waiting to be discovered. These data can provide details on the relationships and behaviour of the accused, and reveal patterns of crime," said CCO (SG II) Tan.

In Tang's case, thousands of text messages, emails, contact details, and documents, some of which were deleted, were recovered from his laptop and smartphone. The task then was for CCO Farihullah to go through them one by one to establish evidence.

"As a trade investigation officer, you have to understand the way companies trade – what are the steps required to import different goods into Singapore, what is the cost, insurance, and freight value, how much duty and GST does the importer need to pay – and look out for discrepancies between what was recorded in the trader's documents and what was declared to Singapore Customs," said CCO Farihullah. "You have to use this information to counter the claims made by the accused. It is often a battle of knowledge between the trader and the investigation officer, so you have to be patient when investigating such duty and GST evasion cases."

After over a year of thorough investigation, CCO Farihullah found out that Tang had employed split payment methods to make it difficult for authorities to trace the actual transaction values and payments made for the cars he imported.

His findings were confirmed by evidence, such as the files retrieved from Tang's laptop and text message conversations with Tang's dealer, which showed that the transaction values of the cars imported were higher than the values declared in the DOF. With concrete evidence presented, CCO Farihullah successfully obtained a confession from Tang. It was time to bring Tang to justice.

The case and all related documents, including the investigation papers, charge sheets and statement of facts, were handed over to the Prosecution Branch to start the legal process against Tang. Josiah Zee was the senior prosecution officer who prosecuted Tang.

To prepare for Tang's prosecution, Mr Zee reviewed the papers and documents provided to him, down to the individual invoices submitted, and spoke to CCO Farihullah to understand the charges laid out.

"It is important that I digest the case details and appreciate the basis on which the charges were recommended," said Mr Zee. "Sometimes, I will also have to speak to the relevant officers involved to have a better understanding of the case. All this takes time, but I have to do it as it helps me take ownership of my arguments in court."

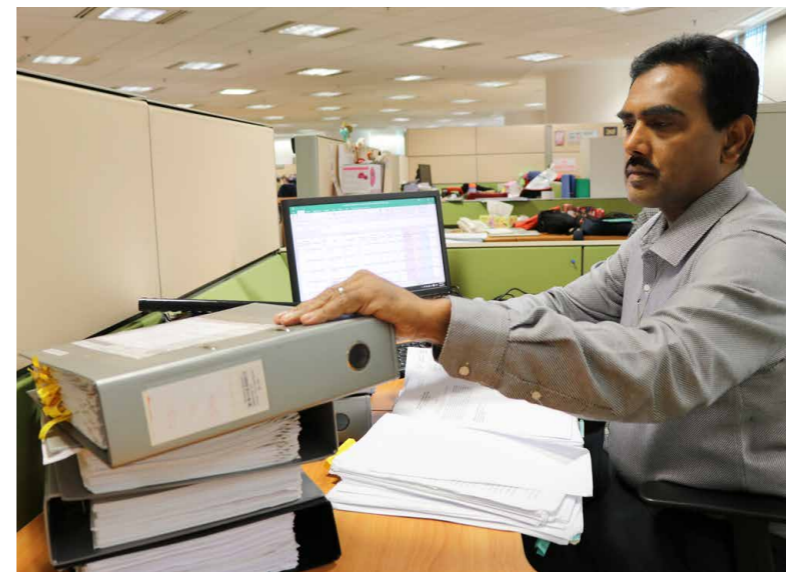
Having considered the circumstances of Tang's case, such as the sophistication of the modus operandi and the amount of duty and GST evaded, Mr Zee then studied the relevant case law and sentencing precedents before drafting the sentencing submission for Tang to the State Courts. He had to ensure that his submission was fair, reasonable, and consistent with similar cases.

"Justice works two ways – while we uphold the integrity of our laws, we also need to ensure that the offender is adequately punished for the offence that he had committed, but not excessively," said Mr Zee.

Tang was sentenced by the State Courts on 21 September 2017 to eight weeks' imprisonment and a fine of \$1.97 million for evading duty and GST. He was also ordered to pay a shortfall in tax of \$1.7 million for giving incorrect information on the open market value of the cars imported.

1. Trade Investigation Officer Farihullah Abdul Wahab Safullah goes through information obtained to build a case against the accused.

2. Prosecution Officer Josiah Zee presents his cases at the State Courts.



PRIORITISING PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

With the Australian Border Force (ABF) having undergone major reorganisation in recent years, **ABF Commissioner Michael Outram** shares how ABF tackles challenges by focusing on their people, and collaborating with their local and international counterparts.



Images:
Australian Border Force

Commissioner Outram, what are some of the ABF's key priorities in the next few years?

Our operational priorities for the future fall under three key areas; maintaining the integrity of Australia's migration and visa system, strengthening our role as Australia's customs service, and continuing our critical border protection functions.

ABF's responsibility is to maintain the integrity and health of Australia's migration and visa system by deterring, preventing, finding and dealing with systemic vulnerabilities and threats. Our work in this area includes Operation Sovereign Borders, compliance operations that deal with serious or systemic non-compliance and criminality within the visa holding cohort, and detention and removal operations.

We are also particularly focused on trade enforcement, including streamlined processes for companies that do the right thing and finding and penalising those that do not. We will continue our operations that protect intellectual property rights, look for evidence of slavery in the supply chain and, importantly, deal with revenue evasion. This includes the stand-up of the new Illicit Tobacco Taskforce in July this year. Illicit tobacco is worth about \$600 million in lost revenue each year, a lot of which goes back into the hands of criminal groups to fund other criminal activity.

Our border protection role will continue to focus on tackling the cross-border movement of prohibited goods and people who would do us, or others, harm. In the last 12 months our operational performance has been excellent when it comes to detecting, seizing and taking action in relation to prohibited imports such as narcotics, firearms, weapons parts and asbestos and I look forward to that continuing.

ABF has undergone major reorganisation in recent years, what are some of the opportunities and challenges faced by the ABF?

By far the biggest challenges facing the ABF are exponential increases in traveller and trade

volumes and a difficult and changing global threat environment. We need to be smart about how we manage these threats using greater intelligence and cooperation with other local and foreign agencies.

The recently established Home Affairs Portfolio has provided greater opportunities for this collaboration and coordination between Australian agencies to consider, assign and appropriately deploy effective joint responses.

The range of operational levers available to us within the ABF gives us the potential to act with great speed and agility against new or heightened threats, and to deal with significant increases in cross border movements of people and goods.

Over the last 12 months, we have also undergone an internal renewal and I am proud to lead a diverse, fresh and capable senior leadership team. I am very confident that within this team there is a great depth of talent to guide and lead our organisation and to ensure succession for the ABF's future leadership roles at the very highest levels.

The ABF's workforce is our most important and valuable asset. With a renewed sense of passion and engagement; with leaders who consistently motivate and value our staff and their contributions; and with a professional, dedicated workforce who have the skills, training and tradecraft to perform to the highest standards, we can be a true global leader in border law enforcement.

The future of the ABF offers exciting possibilities. Our people, operational capabilities and scope of functions at the border place the ABF in an incredibly strong position for the future.

What are the learning points and management insights which you can share from the reorganisation for the benefit of other organisations?

My task and that of my leadership team is to fully harness the potential of our people and capabilities.

I have been very focused, as has my leadership team, on engaging very closely with our workforce to drive the necessary changes collectively; to instil that sense of pride, professionalism and discipline that is required of any modern law enforcement agency.

We will also continue to relentlessly seek to identify and appropriately deal with any person in our organisation whose standard of integrity or behaviour damages the reputation of the 99 per cent plus of our people who are dedicated to their work in protecting our community and who live by a set of common values that most of us share.

Our role at the border brings a responsibility to exercise legislative power judiciously and always with integrity. In that regard, we will continue to work hard to maintain and strengthen the trust and confidence of our stakeholders.

With ASEAN and Australia reaffirming their commitment to further strengthen their strategic partnership, what are some of the areas where you see potential for collaboration between the ABF and other ASEAN customs administrations?

We have a number of long running international relationships with ASEAN nations, which reap dual benefits for the countries involved across a number of areas such as maritime, air security, trade and customs efficiencies and border protection. As part of these relationships, we regularly undertake training and information sharing.

Last year we joined the ASEAN Customs community as a plus one dialogue partner. Australia was very keen to join this grouping as we recognised the importance of ASEAN in furthering economic prosperity in the region, and the vital role customs administrations play both in trade facilitation and border protection.

Two areas of interest that ABF has been exploring with ASEAN Member States are risk management and consumer safety of goods that come across borders. Risk management is a vital component for balancing trade facilitation and border protection by providing information to allow customs administrations to concentrate effort and resources on high risk goods. There are also opportunities to work with industry in this regard. Adulterated goods pose a risk to all communities' and there have been examples of goods causing harm. Again working with industry there is an opportunity for customs administrations to better understand the risks that these goods pose and how to better identify them.

Tobacco smuggling is also a particular concern for a number of ASEAN members and we will continue to engage on this into the future. The ABF's Illicit Tobacco Taskforce will be working closely with our partners offshore to identify and dismantle illicit tobacco supply chains.

Better understanding trade flows is also an area for potential future collaboration. This would help customs administrations identify suspicious transactions and routes, particularly where criminal networks seek to circumvent border controls by mis-declaring goods, seeking concessions not entitled to, mis-describing origin and incorrect tariff classifications. I see international cooperation as critical in dealing with these issues.

Australia and Singapore have over 50 years of bilateral relations. Given this close relationship, what do you think are some areas the ABF and Singapore Customs can further collaborate on?

Both our administrations are embarking on trade modernisation programmes and I believe there are significant areas within this space where we can further collaborate. Singapore's vision for the next generation of their National Trade Platform and the new Global Trade Connectivity Network align with our thinking on providing new and innovative ways to bolster trade amongst the region.


Our administrations have access to large amounts of data, and this will only grow with the increase in trade in the region. How do we best utilise this data? Data analytics is another area of potential future collaboration to help us better manage risk.

As I noted previously, our collective workforces are our greatest asset. Recruiting and retaining staff is a challenge for all agencies and customs administrations are no exception. Managing human resources are a core component to any success and there is much to learn from each other on how to best lead, manage, inspire and motivate our staff.

We highly value our ongoing relationship with Singapore and look forward to continued efforts to boost regional cooperation and to further build the capabilities of all ASEAN members.

The ABF and Singapore Customs have inked the Singapore-Australia Mutual Recognition Arrangement. How would this benefit companies from both sides?

The signing of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) will save accredited businesses in both countries time and money and strengthen supply chain security.

The MRA will give Trusted Traders unique access to trade facilitation benefits and reduced costs while ensuring the integrity of our borders. It reduces the regulatory burden on businesses and increase access to global markets. We estimate the implementation will add about \$119 million to the Australian economy over the next ten years. 



"The signing of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) will save accredited businesses in both countries time and money and strengthen supply chain security."

SINGAPORE AND AUSTRALIA SIGN ARRANGEMENT TO FACILITATE TRADE FOR CERTIFIED COMPANIES



Singapore's Director-General of Customs, Mr Ho Chee Pong, and the Commissioner of ABF and Comptroller-General of Customs, Mr Michael Outram, signed the MRA in Singapore.

Discussions on implementation procedures are ongoing, and an update will be provided when the MRA is ready for implementation. Singapore's total trade with Australia amounted to more than S\$19 billion in 2017, making Australia our 13th largest trading partner in 2017. 

BRINGING THE TRADING COMMUNITY UP TO SPEED THROUGH INTER-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP



Under a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) of Authorised Economic Operator programmes signed by Singapore Customs and the Australian Border Force (ABF) on 31 May 2018, Singapore companies certified as having lower risks will enjoy faster customs clearance with reduced documentary and cargo inspections.

Likewise, Australian companies that are certified by the ABF will enjoy similar facilitation for their goods exported to Singapore.

Singapore is the first ASEAN country to sign an MRA with Australia.


The Australia-Singapore MRA recognises the compatibility of the supply chain security measures implemented by companies certified under Singapore Customs' Secure Trade Partnership (STP) programme and the trusted companies of the ABF's Australian Trusted Trader programme.

As an initiative under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, a pact signed by Singapore and Australia in 2015 to deepen existing areas of cooperation and catalyse new ones, the MRA is set to foster closer customs collaboration and elevate bilateral trade ties.

Singapore Customs partnered several Competent Authorities (CAs) and hosted a Customs-CA Seminar to share information on the goods regulated by these CAs. The seminar was held on 21 May 2018 at the Civil Service Club at Tessensohn. The CAs that took part included the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore, Info-communications Media Development Authority, and the National Environment Agency.

It is part of Singapore Customs' ongoing efforts to share requirements with the business community to update their knowledge on recent developments and regulatory requirements for various controlled goods.

More than 180 importers, exporters, freight forwarders and declaring agents attended the seminar, which provided them with insights on the measures put in place by the CAs to safeguard Singapore as a safe and secure trading hub.

Mr Marcus Lim, Customs and Trade Compliance Specialist, DB Schenker Singapore, said the seminar allowed him to gain useful information as he has to deal with customers from a wide range of industries. "Topics like Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Prohibited Telecommunication Equipment, and Hazardous Chemicals and Wastes were especially useful as the information shared was new to us. This seminar helped us gain knowledge on how to import and export products with the right certificates and documents," he added. 

Singapore Customs announced at the Customs-Competent Authorities seminar that the STCCED 2018 will replace the existing 2012 version with effect from 24 June 2018 and shared on the key changes.

The STCCED 2018 incorporates the ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN) 2017. It is an online publication incorporating new digital features such as search function by keyword, bookmark, and help features. For more information, refer to Circular 04/2018.

View or download the STCCED 2018 from www.customs.gov.sg > Businesses > Harmonised System (HS) Classification of Goods > Resources. For more information, refer to Circular 04/2018. 


SINGAPORE TRADE CLASSIFICATION, CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DUTIES (STCCED) 2018 REPLACES 2012 VERSION

EXPLORING SINGLE WINDOWS LINK WITH CHINA CUSTOMS



Singapore Customs' Head of International Relations, Ms Teo Angie, hosted a delegation led by Mr Bai Shi, Deputy Head, National Office of Port Administration, General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) for the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Single Window between Singapore Customs and the GACC.

During the meeting held from 31 May to 1 June 2018, Singapore Customs shared on the latest developments of Singapore's National Trade Platform and National Single Window. The GACC then presented on China's National Single Window and its recent institutional reforms. Both sides had a lively exchange of views on the future plans for the Working Group, which include exploring the linking of both countries' National Single Windows.


While in Singapore, the delegation also visited the Pasir Panjang Export Inspection Station to learn more about Singapore Customs' scanning and inspection processes. 

ENHANCING OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES TO COUNTER WMD PROLIFERATION

Singapore Customs and the United States Department of Energy jointly organised a Commodity Identification Training on 16 and 17 May 2018.

Through interactive activities and sharing by the trainers, participants learnt more about the techniques and technologies used in identifying materials that can be used in the production of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Such joint training programmes enhance the operational capabilities of the participating agencies, and demonstrate Singapore's commitment in working with our international partners to prevent illicit shipments of WMD-related strategic commodities through Singapore.

A total of 30 participants from Singapore Customs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority attended the training programme. 



NEW STP COMPANIES ON BOARD

The Secure Trade Partnership (STP) is a Singapore Customs voluntary certification programme that encourages companies to adopt robust security measures and contribute towards improving the security of the global supply chain. It is consistent with the World Customs Organisation SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. The following companies were STP-certified in the first quarter of 2018.

COMPANIES WITH STP STATUS

Edmund Optics Singapore

Edmund Optics (EO) Singapore and its parent company, Edmund Optics Inc., is a supplier of optics and imaging components for life sciences, biomedical, semiconductor, research and development, and defence markets worldwide. EO Singapore offers in-house design services, rapid prototyping, and volume manufacturing capabilities. "The STP certification is an endorsement from Singapore Customs that EO Singapore has strict security measures in place. With it, our customers know that they are working with a lower-risk supplier," said Mr Francis Ang, Managing Director.

HUB Distributors Services Pte Ltd

HUB Distributors Services is a full-fledged third-party logistics company offering a range of services across the supply chain. The company also established HUB Logistics and HUB Express to provide integrated and holistic supply chain services to their clients. "We understand the challenges of today's supply chain and believe in providing best-in-class logistical support to our clients. The company is confident of fulfilling our customers' needs by fully utilising our facilities, expertise, tools, and resources to make the logistics process an area of competitive advantage without compromising the safety and security of our operations," said Mr Alex Ea, Managing Director. 

TRANSHIPMENT PROCEDURES: DOS AND DON'TS

The transshipment and transit of goods through Singapore are regulated under the Customs Act, the Regulation of Imports and Exports Act, the Strategic Goods (Control) Act, and other legislation by the relevant Competent Authorities. Goods that are transhipped are not subject to duty or Goods and Services Tax. As a trader or declaring agent, you are accountable for the transshipment and inter-gateway movement of goods. Here are five things you should know to improve your compliance with regulatory requirements.

WORLD'S TOP CONTAINER TRANSHIPMENT HUB

According to estimates by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, container throughput at the port in Singapore rose 8.9 per cent to 33.7 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2017, making Singapore the world's top container transshipment hub.

For more information on transshipment dos and don'ts, visit www.customs.gov.sg/businesses/transshipping-goods/transshipment-procedures

- 1 For each consignment, **do know the contents you are transshipping and who you are transshipping for**, by clarifying with the forwarder or other relevant parties.
- 2 **Do check with the relevant Competent Authorities** on their requirements to transship controlled items, and ensure that you comply with the transshipment procedures and declaration requirements.
- 3 **Do remind drivers to produce the goods/containers and related permit for clearance for transshipments with inter-gateway movement** at the relevant checkpoints declared in the permits. Remarks such as "Customs clearance is required" could be stamped on a prominent place on the permit.
- 4 **Do not use your company's Unique Entity Number (UEN) to transship goods that do not belong to you** unless you are acting as a handling agent for overseas customers (without a UEN). In doing so, you undertake the responsibility to ensure that all regulatory requirements such as customer due diligence are complied with. Also, your TradeNet user ID and password should never be shared with other parties.
- 5 **Do not use transshipment procedures for unauthorised purposes.** For example, transshipment procedures should not be used to temporarily bring in goods from Free Trade Zones into customs territory for exhibition or other use.

TRAINING CALENDAR

Please note that dates are subject to change. For the full programme and registration details, please refer to www.customsacademy.gov.sg

SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT

This course provides trade declarants with an overview of customs procedures pertaining to the import and export of goods, the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, classification of goods, and the rules of origin.

- SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days)
- SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (half-day)
- SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (half-day)

Participants may register for individual modules.

5-7 SEPT
2018

SC111 HANDS-ON TRADENET DECLARATION

This one-day workshop provides new declarants who have just entered the industry with basic information on TradeNet, and its various message and declaration types.

The guided practical session uses simulated scenarios to help new declarants prepare and submit a declaration using the Government Frontend Solution.

23 JULY
2018

SC401 CUSTOMS COMPETENCY TEST FOR DECLARANTS

This module is designed to test an individual's knowledge of the customs procedures and documentation requirements. Upon passing this test, the individual can then apply for registration with Singapore Customs as a declarant to submit TradeNet permit declarations.

This is an open-book test comprising 50 multiple-choice questions. The topics tested include: customs procedures, TradeNet declarations, valuation, classification, rules of origin, and specialised procedures. The one-hour test can be taken during the morning or afternoon session.

Individuals who wish to sit for the test are advised to familiarise themselves with the above-listed subject areas. They can do so through courses or e-learning at Singapore Customs Academy and the Customs Virtual Academy, and by visiting the Customs website.

11 SEPT
21 SEPT
2018

(AM AND PM
SESSIONS
AVAILABLE)

OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS

This bimonthly programme is designed to equip newly-registered manufacturers with a better understanding of the rules of origin under Singapore's Free Trade Agreements, the application procedure for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements.

For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg

*September classes will be available online for registration by the first week of July.

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Step 3: Delegate Roles to your Team

Nominate a Business Administrator to manage and delegate roles for day-to-day activities on NTP.

**NTP charges will only commence in
January 2019**

www.ntp.gov.sg



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS
We Make Trade Easy, Fair & Secure

55 Newton Road #10-01 Revenue House
Singapore 307987
www.customs.gov.sg