

HIGHLIGHTS

Getting the Most Out of Your TradeFIRST Assessment

Page 05 >>

Consulting the Public: Improvements to the Customs Act

Page 07 >>

New Tax Relief for Import of Clinical Trial Materials

Page 08 >>



Both Sides of the Same Coin: Merging Control and Facilitation with Risk Management

Rather than seeing them as direct opposites, Singapore Customs regards trade regulation and trade facilitation as two sides of the same coin: contrasting roles that are essential for each other. To achieve both objectives without compromising either one is a challenge, given Singapore's large trade volume. For Singapore Customs, this is where risk management is key.

Article on Page 01 >>



Making Sense of Singapore's Export Control Regime

With countries competing globally to attract new business and investments from multinational corporations, the existence of export controls may seem a hindrance to legitimate trade and growth. But for Singapore, the first Southeast Asian country to implement an enhanced export control regime, such controls make good business sense.

Article on Page 03 >>

inSIGHT

KEEPING THE BIG PICTURE IN SIGHT

On the surface, trade controls and regulations might seem like a hindrance to business and an impediment to the smooth flow of trade. So how do we at Singapore Customs reconcile our roles as both trade regulator and facilitator?

For the answer, it helps to take a step back and adopt a broader perspective. As explained in our main feature on Singapore Customs' risk management system, trade control and trade facilitation are really two sides of the same coin: contrasting roles that are essential for each other.

Take for example our export control regime which manages the flow of sensitive technologies and products, also known as strategic goods. As detailed in our second feature, even as they contribute to global security, these export controls are key to ensuring the continued confidence of investors and businesses in Singapore's trading system.

Additionally, trade regulation and facilitation measures can work well hand-in-hand, as evidenced by the successful adoption of our TradeFIRST framework. In our third feature, we provide companies with useful tips on how they can enhance their supply chain security standards and qualify for more types of trade facilitation from Singapore Customs.

Traders can be assured that our comprehensive system of trade controls is continually reviewed and improved. To that end, your feedback is valued. We hope that as you browse through the articles in this issue, you find a new appreciation for the bigger picture and your significant part in it.

PATRICIA BAY
Editor

To read, download or subscribe to the online edition of inSYNC, please visit www.customs.gov.sg/insync

CONTENTS

Features

- 01 Both Sides of the Same Coin: Merging Control and Facilitation with Risk Management
- 03 Making Sense of Singapore's Export Control Regime
- 05 Getting the Most Out of Your TradeFIRST Assessment

Updates

- 07 Consulting to the Public: Improvements to the Customs Act
- 08 New Tax Relief for Import of Clinical Trial Materials
- 09 Reaffirming Ties with International Counterparts
- 10 Car Importer Fined for Falsifying Documents

Inside Customs

- 11 On a Learning Journey – Visit to TNT
- 13 Training Calendar / Event Highlights

DESIGN BY

Green House Design + Communications

Please let us know what you think of inSYNC. We welcome your ideas on what you would like to see and how we can do better. Write in to the Editor at customs_media@customs.gov.sg

InSYNC is a publication of Singapore Customs. Copyright of the materials contained in this publication belongs to Singapore Customs. Nothing in here shall be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written consent of Singapore Customs. All rights reserved. All information is correct at time of publication.

Both Sides of the Same Coin: Merging Control and Facilitation with Risk Management

Rather than seeing them as direct opposites, Singapore Customs regards trade regulation and trade facilitation as two sides of the same coin: contrasting roles that are essential for each other. To achieve both objectives without compromising either one is a challenge, given Singapore's large trade volume. For Singapore Customs, this is where risk management is key.



“Think of the trading system as a busy expressway,” explains Singapore Customs Director-General Mr Fong Yong Kian. “It’s built to enable vehicles to move quickly, saving time and costs, but having the expressway alone is not enough. For things to go smoothly, we also need traffic rules.”

“Imagine driving down a highway where drivers do not follow a speed limit or signal their intention when they want to change lanes or overtake others. It would be chaotic and very dangerous for all motorists,” says Mr Fong.

Following this analogy, Singapore Customs plays the role of the trade highway police. As the regulator of trade, its greater purpose is not to slow down

trade flows, or even to arrest errant traders, but to facilitate smooth-flowing trade traffic and peaceful journeys for law-abiding traders. As such, facilitation and control are vital to each other.

But even the most vigilant highway police cannot keep an eye on every vehicle on the road: Singapore alone handles a significant one-fifth of the world’s total container transshipment throughput. Hence, to facilitate trade and protect revenue while securing Singapore’s status as a trusted global trade hub, risk-based rules and procedures are used to govern its trade highway.

Under Singapore Customs’ risk assessment system, the compliance records of traders as well as their

willingness to cooperate are taken into consideration. Those showing a poor history of compliance are subject to more frequent interventions whilst the rest are not inconvenienced unnecessarily.

It is a rigorous process whereby the control measures are constantly reviewed: emerging risks that are detected in the operating environment are assessed, then appropriate adjustments are made or new control measures incorporated to reduce risk exposures without hampering the flow of legitimate

trade. Control measures are also in place to detect and deal with offences early so that impact on trade is minimised.

The application of risk management to achieve both facilitation and control can be observed at various stages of the trade permit approval and goods clearance process. For every import consignment, a trade declaration has to be submitted and approved electronically by Singapore Customs before it is allowed to clear the Customs checkpoint.

Singapore Customs plays the role of the trade highway police. As the regulator of trade, its greater purpose is not to slow down trade flows, or even to arrest errant traders, but to facilitate smooth-flowing trade traffic and peaceful journeys for law-abiding traders. As such, facilitation and control are vital to each other.



- 1. BEFORE TRADE DECLARATION APPROVAL**
Before being approved, every trade declaration goes through a series of validations. System validations and online processing work to weed out erroneous or unsubstantiated declarations. For the nine million or so declarations processed by Singapore Customs every year, 90% are approved within 10 minutes. Some approved declarations will also be imposed with conditions requiring the declarants to submit supporting documents to Singapore Customs for post-clearance verifications.



- 2. AFTER TRADE DECLARATION APPROVAL**
Using a detailed analysis of all available information, profiles of suspicious consignments are created. If a trade declaration after being approved matches one of these suspicious profiles, Singapore Customs' targeting system tags the consignment to be scanned, checked or sealed for further examination at the checkpoint. Under this system, less than 1% of all consignments are targeted for interventions.



- 3. DURING CHECKPOINT CLEARANCE**
At checkpoint clearance, checkpoint officers may conduct additional scanning, checking and sealing for non-targeted consignments if they exhibit signs that arouse suspicions. The others – a majority of consignments – are granted green-lane clearance without any delays.



- 4. AFTER CHECKPOINT CLEARANCE**
After clearing the Customs checkpoint, consignments that were sealed – typically less than 0.1% of the total – are unstuffed under the supervision of Singapore Customs to ensure that the goods match the permit details declared.



- 5. POST-CLEARANCE AUDIT**
After the consignments have been released from customs control, audits are also conducted by Singapore Customs on traders to verify the accuracy of their trade declarations, as well as to assess the effectiveness of traders' internal control systems. These post-clearance audits are conducted both on a routine basis and in response to intelligence or risk analysis.

Making Sense of Singapore's Export Control Regime

With countries competing globally to attract new business and investments from multinational corporations, the existence of export controls may seem a hindrance to legitimate trade and growth. But for Singapore, the first Southeast Asian country to implement an enhanced export control regime, such controls make good business sense.

Introduced by governments to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ensure greater security, an export control regime consists of laws and regulations that regulate the trade of certain sensitive technologies and products. Increasingly, the “control lists” adopted by governments have gone beyond conventional arms and military equipment to include dual-use goods: products with commercial applications but which can also be used for military purposes or for the development of WMD.

Under Singapore's Strategic Goods (Control) Act, a permit is required prior to any export, transshipment, bringing in transit, intangible transfer or electronic transmission of items or technology on the Strategic Goods Control List. Traders are also required to be registered prior to brokering in certain categories of Strategic Goods. Such export controls cover commonly traded industrial goods such as integrated circuits, aluminium alloys, ball bearings, valves and testing machinery that meet certain specifications. In 2010 alone, over S\$24 billion in strategic goods were brought out of Singapore.

A BUSINESS CASE FOR EXPORT CONTROLS

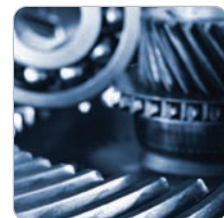
The number of countries that have introduced export control continues to rise. Within the region, major jurisdictions like China, Hong Kong, India, Japan and South Korea have

introduced or are in the process of implementing their own control regimes. And rather than being regarded as an unwelcome compliance burden, export controls are increasingly seen as contributing to facilitation of secured trade as a whole.

Firstly, a strong and well-managed export control system helps inspire confidence in a country's trading system. For Singapore, this enhances our international reputation as a secure and trusted global trade hub. Singapore enjoys a high standing among its trading partners for its export controls. This in turn allows local companies greater access to, and facilitation in terms of re-exports and re-transfers of strategic goods.

“From the business perspective, the implementation of an export control regime will have a financial and operative impact,” said Ms Wong Wai Leng, Manager of Intel Mobile Communications South East Asia. “However, it also gives reassurance to the authorities of the originating country that the delivered strategic goods or technology will not be re-exported to a third party without approval from the authority of the intermediate country.”

Secondly, export controls contribute to a secure trade system, preventing sensitive products and technology from falling into the wrong hands. For multinational corporations looking for a suitable place to relocate key functions like manufacturing or research and



development, the additional compliance cost is better viewed as an assurance to gaining continual access to high-end technology and products from major trading partners with export controls. And by attracting advanced technology with the assurance of greater security, a country with strong export controls improves its competitive position.

Additionally, for companies which have already developed the necessary compliance processes and operating procedures, export controls seldom count as a negative factor when making a decision of where to trade or outsource their business.

MANAGING CONTROL WITH COMPLIANCE

To minimise the impact that export controls could have on legitimate trade, Singapore Customs implemented the Strategic Trade Scheme (STS) back in 2007. Based on the principles of risk management, the STS looks to promote effective internal compliance by offering legitimate traders greater facilitation in their permit declarations involving strategic goods.

Comprising three Tiers, the STS accords different levels of facilitation and flexibility to companies depending on the quality of their internal compliance practices. This allows Singapore Customs to level the playing field for traders who comply with export control rules by ensuring that they are not unfairly disadvantaged.

For businesses that rely on the timely delivery of strategic goods like Hitachi Data Systems (HDS), these facilitative declaration procedures are pivotal. "The distribution of HDS equipment is very time critical," explains Ms Trudi West, its Director of Global Trade Compliance Systems. "At the same time, HDS has set very strong targets: to comply with all international and global export regulations while meeting on-time delivery and overall customer satisfaction levels."

According to Ms West, HDS decided to open its new distribution centre in Singapore after learning about its effective export control regime. The company has now positioned itself as a highly reliable vendor of information technology products in the Asia Pacific market.

"WIN-WIN" FOR GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY THROUGH MUTUAL COOPERATION

Singapore Customs recognises that industry-government collaboration is key in combating proliferation, and conducts outreach extensively to the industry to raise awareness and compliance of export controls through seminars and courses. Without industry cooperation, the government alone cannot curb the proliferation of WMD.

Any country, Singapore included, could very well become the next victim of a terrorist attack using strategic goods or technology that could have been diverted through ports with ineffective export controls. And as Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said last year in Washington during the inaugural Nuclear Security Summit, nuclear terrorism poses an existential threat to a small, densely populated city-state like Singapore.

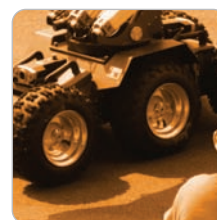
Effective export controls require industry-government collaboration, and offer "win-win" outcomes for both the government and the industry, by combating proliferation and boosting security while minimising restraints on trade.

Information on Singapore's export control regime, including the strategic goods control list and the Strategic Trade Scheme, is available at www.customs.gov.sg/stgc

Singapore Customs organises seminars and regular courses on Singapore's strategic goods control system for the trading community. Information on these courses and seminars is available at www.customs.gov.sg under "Courses for Businesses".

In addition, traders are required to exercise due diligence to ensure that the goods and technology to be exported or transferred to consignees or end-users are not restricted under United Nations Security Council sanctions, or other unilateral sanctions or embargoes.

Current sanctions and other red-flag indicators that traders should look out for in their export orders and shipments can be found at www.customs.gov.sg/stgc under "Sanctioned Lists & Red Flags".



Getting the Most Out of Your TradeFIRST Assessment

With TradeFIRST – Singapore Customs’ one-stop trade facilitation framework – companies applying for schemes or facilitations need only undergo a single assessment to qualify for a whole suite of facilitations under one of five TradeFIRST bands. But what does it take to move up from one band to the next? We offer some useful pointers.



Under TradeFIRST, companies will be assessed holistically in five areas: company profile, inventory management and controls, compliance, procedures and processes, and security.

A clear and transparent set of assessment criteria is available for each of these areas.

Companies will first have to complete a self-assessment checklist, allowing them to gauge how well they meet the assessment criteria. This presents a great opportunity for them to make further improvements to their systems and processes before the actual on-site assessment.

For the full TradeFIRST assessment criteria, please refer to the TradeFIRST self-assessment checklist available at www.customs.gov.sg under TradeFIRST.

YOUR TradeFIRST ASSESSMENT: WHAT GOOD PRACTICES SHOULD BE IN PLACE?

<p>COMPANY PROFILE The general background and security practices of your company</p>	<p>Visible communication of your company's vision and mission statements to both internal and external parties through relevant channels and platforms.</p> <p>Pre-and post-employment screening to help your company avoid costly hiring mistakes. Extensive background checks should also be conducted depending on the nature of the job appointment.</p> <p>An organisation chart and documentation that stipulates staff roles and responsibilities in the company's work processes and reporting channels.</p> <p>Regular reviews of your company's security and risk-mitigating measures.</p>
<p>INVENTORY MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLS The records of inventory and transactions, the ability of your company's systems to track the transactions and flag discrepancies, proper data storage and back-up</p>	<p>An information management policy that enables its administrators to classify, control and evaluate who can access information, specify how long information should be retained, and assess how effectively staff members are complying with the policy.</p> <p>An information technology (IT) system that is robust enough to detect any irregularities, regular data backup for essential business information and systems, and having in place IT security measures such as anti-virus, firewalls and unique password authentication.</p>
<p>COMPLIANCE Your company's compliance records with Singapore Customs and other relevant authorities</p>	<p>Minimal customs-related offences, which means avoiding the late submission of declarations and/or manifests, as well as computation and data entry errors when making declarations, etc.</p>
<p>PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES The procedures and processes on the handling and storage of cargo, containers and conveyances, including procedures for handling cargo-related incidents</p>	<p>Documented procedures that comply with the permit/licensing requirements of Singapore Customs and other controlling agencies. These procedures should also be clearly communicated to relevant employees.</p> <p>A documented drivers' guide ensuring that company drivers park loaded conveyances in allocated secured areas, thereby preventing unauthorised access and/or tampering. Conveyances refer to trucks, containers and any other vehicle which can transport cargo.</p> <p>For companies with sea shipments, have procedures to verify the physical integrity of the container structure. A seven-point container inspection is recommended.</p>
<p>SECURITY The measures to secure the premises and control access, measures to prevent tampering of goods, policies relating to business partner screening, the existence of crisis management and business continuity plans</p>	<p>Regular inspections of your company's external and internal perimeter fencing or demarcation to ensure that they are properly maintained. Warning signs could be erected to deter possible intruders from entering restricted areas.</p> <p>Access controls at all entrances and exits. These could include stationing guards/receptionists, installing CCTVs, card access systems, etc.</p> <p>A contingency or emergency plan for disasters or emergency security situations. A good plan would be properly documented with flowcharts to illustrate the chain of events and critical contact persons in times of emergency.</p>

Consulting the Public: Improvements to the Customs Act

In a public consultation held from 2 to 23 September 2011, the Ministry of Finance and Singapore Customs invited the public and trading community to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to the Customs Act. A total of 21 written responses were received.

Last amended in 2008, the Customs Act is reviewed regularly to improve the overall efficiency of the customs administration regime in Singapore. The most recent proposed changes aim to further strengthen customs enforcement, align the provisions of the Act with current operations as well as provide greater legal clarity.

Some of the amendments being considered in the area of enforcement include enhancing penalties for contraband tobacco offences to improve deterrence. Besides increasing the

A summary of the responses by the Ministry of Finance and Singapore Customs to the comments received is available at www.mof.gov.sg under "Public Consultation".



Singapore Customs met with representatives from key trade associations to explain the changes and obtain feedback on the proposed amendments to the Customs Act.

minimum court fines, Singapore Customs is proposing the introduction of mandatory imprisonment for repeat offenders who have committed offences involving more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products.

To facilitate the sharing of information among domestic public agencies, and to better safeguard national security, public health and safety, changes have also been proposed to allow for the disclosure of information collected under the Customs Act for the investigation and prosecution of offences under prescribed domestic laws. Legitimate traders should be assured that safeguards will be in place ensuring that their information stays well-protected.

Other amendments seek to improve administration of the Act or clarify existing legislation. These include a new summons system for minor offences,

appointing agents for the recovery of duties to reduce administrative costs and aid timely recovery, and allowing for the retention of trade documents in image systems instead of paper documents.

The public feedback from such consultations is important in determining how the proposed legislative amendments could be improved.

Besides the online feedback channel where members of the public could submit their comments, Singapore Customs also met with representatives of the key trade associations to explain the proposed changes and obtain their feedback directly. These sessions provided a good opportunity for the agency to clarify the concerns of the trading community and engage traders early on the upcoming changes. The trade associations were generally in favour of the proposed amendments.

New Tax Relief for Import of Clinical Trial Materials

To promote the growth of Singapore's biomedical sector, Goods and Services Tax (GST) relief will now be granted on clinical trial materials imported into the country. First announced in the 2011 Budget Statement, this new measure took effect from 1 October 2011.



Overseas pharmaceutical or biotechnical companies sometimes engage local intermediaries, such as logistics companies or research organisations, to import medical products intended for use in clinical trials. As all goods imported into Singapore are generally subject to GST, these local intermediaries faced limitations when making GST claims for the clinical trial materials belonging to their overseas sponsors.

Prior to the implementation of this relief, a local intermediary was not entitled to recover the GST incurred on materials imported for use in local clinical trials as there was no subsequent supply of the clinical trial materials. Neither would it have been able to utilise any of the specialised GST suspension schemes, such as the Major Exporter Scheme, to import the clinical trial materials.

For clinical trial materials imported for the purposes of re-export or scrapping, while there were existing means for the import GST to be relieved or claimed, these required the local intermediary to identify the purpose of the import upfront. In practice, the intermediary's overseas sponsor may not have provided this information at the point of importation, leading to difficulties when making the claim.

Thus, to support local clinical research activities and ease the compliance burden for businesses engaged in clinical trials, GST relief is now granted upfront on all clinical trial materials imported into Singapore. Established on the basis that clinical trial materials cannot be legally traded or sold, and are hence not for private consumption, this GST relief applies to imports of clinical trial materials for all purposes, including local clinical trials, re-export for overseas trials, destruction and disposal.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Details on how to qualify for the GST relief on clinical trial materials and the applicable import procedures are available in Circular No. 20/2011 at www.customs.gov.sg

Before applying for GST relief, however, the necessary approvals and/or notifications should be sought from the Health Sciences Authority (HSA). Additionally, for clinical trial materials imported for scrapping, approvals should also be sought from the National Environment Agency (NEA). Details can be found in the HSA Circular "Import of Clinical Trial Materials (CTM) GST Relief Arrangements (October 2011)" on the HSA website at www.hsa.gov.sg under Health Products Regulation, Clinical Trials, Industry Communication.



Reaffirming Ties with International Counterparts

In July 2011, Singapore Customs hosted visits by the Director General of the Royal Malaysian Customs Dato' Sri Haji Mohamed Khalid bin Yusuf as well as the Vice Minister of the General Administration of Customs, People's Republic of China, Mr Sun Yibiao.

QUASHING CIGARETTE SMUGGLING WITH MALAYSIAN CUSTOMS

At the invitation of Singapore Customs' Director-General Mr Fong Yong Kian, Dato' Sri Khalid led a six-member delegation from the Royal Malaysian Customs to Singapore from 14 to 15 July 2011.

The Malaysians met with members of Singapore Customs' senior management team and were briefed on the agency's latest initiatives, including the TradeFIRST framework launched earlier this year.

As part of the visit, Singapore Customs arranged for the delegation to tour the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority's Ports Command to view the latest cargo scanning technologies. The delegation also visited the PSA Corporation's Keppel and Brani Terminals where they were briefed on port operations by Singapore's largest port operator.

On the enforcement front, Dato' Sri Khalid lauded the close cooperation between the two Customs agencies in their enforcement efforts against contraband cigarettes. He noted that the cooperation proved extremely fruitful in April this year when contraband cigarettes with potential duties and taxes amounting to almost S\$3.85 million were seized in a joint operation by the two Customs authorities.



Dato' Sri Haji Mohamed Khalid bin Yusuf, Director General of the Royal Malaysian Customs and Mr Fong Yong Kian, Director-General of Singapore Customs (centre, in red and blue ties) with senior officials from both agencies.

MUTUAL COOPERATION WITH CHINA CUSTOMS

China Customs Vice Minister Mr Sun Yibiao met with Mr Fong Yong Kian on 28 July 2011. Mr Sun was part of a high-level government delegation led by China's Vice-Premier Wang Qishan who was in Singapore to co-chair several government-to-government level meetings.

During the meeting at Singapore Customs, Mr Fong and Mr Sun reaffirmed the longstanding and warm bilateral relations between Singapore Customs and China Customs, with Mr Fong recalling his various visits to China and Vice Minister Sun Songpu's visit to Singapore in 2009.

Mr Sun was provided with an overview of Singapore Customs and both sides discussed a wide range of customs issues, including Singapore's border

management model after the agency was restructured in 2003, the national trade single window and TradeFIRST.

The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to expedite discussions on the mutual recognition of their Authorised Economic Operator programmes, and to continue exploring new and mutually beneficially areas for cooperation.



Mr Sun Yibiao, Vice Minister of General Administration of China Customs (left) and Mr Fong Yong Kian reaffirmed the warm ties between the two agencies.

Car Importer Fined for Falsifying Documents



For using falsified documents to support their Declarations of Facts (DOFs) for the import of 27 BMWs, a car importer and his employee each faced a fine of \$12,000 or eight weeks' imprisonment in default.

To import any motor car or motorcycle into Singapore, one must first submit a DOF to Singapore Customs. The DOF has to be approved by Singapore Customs before it can be used to apply for the duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) payment permit for the vehicle's import.

In its investigation into the business activities of Soh Kam Wah, sole proprietor of City Automobile, Singapore Customs uncovered 18 sets of DOFs with falsified supporting documents that were prepared by his administrative assistant, Loo Peng Quee Daniel, for the import of 27 BMW cars. Soh had signed and submitted them to Customs despite being aware of their fraudulent nature.

Pleading guilty to eight charges each, Soh and Loo both faced another 30 charges of using falsified documents and abetment in making untrue declarations, which were taken into consideration for

sentencing. Soh faced another charge for failing to declare all the fitted options for an Audi car in a separate DOF submitted to Singapore Customs, which resulted in a lower assessed customs value for the car. This charge was also taken into consideration for sentencing.

Under the Customs Act, importers are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information in the DOF and supporting documents submitted to Singapore Customs.

Any person found guilty of using falsified documents or making incorrect declarations will face a fine of up to \$10,000 or the equivalent of the amount of tax payable, whichever is higher, or a jail term of up to 12 months, or both.

On a Learning Journey – Visit to TNT

To better facilitate trade, Singapore Customs regularly engages its major customers for a more in-depth understanding of their operations and business needs. Most recently in August 2011, a group of 24 Singapore Customs representatives, including key senior management members, participated in a learning journey to the TNT's regional hub in Singapore.



Organised by TNT Express Singapore, the learning journey brought the Singapore Customs officers to the 7,000 square metre facility located within the Changi Airfreight Centre, where they were warmly welcomed by several representatives of the company, including the General Manager for Network Hubs Asia Pacific Operations Mr Ng Chee Chong, Country General Manager Mr Damien Tan, and Regional Customs & Regulatory Affairs Manager for Asia Mr Lok Hwee Chong.

First, Singapore Customs officers were given an overview of TNT with a slideshow outlining the company's history as well as their global and regional operations. Afterwards, TNT representatives brought the group on a tour of the premises to view its operations and facilities. As the region's first integrated air and road hub, the TNT's Singapore Regional Hub represents a S\$20 million investment by TNT with a capacity of handling 150 tons of consignments a day.

On the tour, the finer details of the business and its operations were explained to the Singapore Customs officers, and questions raised were patiently addressed by the TNT representatives present. These ranged from the steps TNT uses to process goods entering and leaving Singapore, to the specific kinds of the documentation involved.



Singapore Customs officers visiting TNT's Singapore Regional Hub located at the Changi Airfreight Centre as part of its regular customer engagement efforts.

One particular aspect of TNT's operations left an impression on Yeo Beng Huay, Singapore Customs' Head of Corporate Information Technology. Said Ms Yeo, "I'm impressed with its set-up and its leveraging of technology to ensure that goods are delivered to customers in the most efficient and secure manner. This is evident in its deployment of smart trucks, which provides not just track-and-trace visibility, but also allows its control centre to remotely seize control of a truck should the need arise."

Although tours to TNT's facilities are not uncommon, the special arrangements made by TNT for Singapore Customs officers to access the airside of the airport for this visit was a first.

"The visit was not a hassle-free one," noted Joyce Lim, Singapore Customs' Head of Checkpoint Services & Investigation. "We had to go through many rounds of security clearance – and then we saw that it was the same for the cargo: all goods are screened and validated before being delivered onboard the freighter. It is reassuring to know that security is being taken this seriously and that TNT has adequate measures in place to ensure supply chain security."

The tour had also been specially scheduled to coincide with TNT's flight schedule, affording the officers the rare opportunity to observe first-hand the unloading and loading process of a freighter plane, as well as to board the plane to observe its internal makeup.

Expressing his appreciation for the efforts TNT took in organising the tour and its unique educational experience, Loh Fook Meng, Assistant Director-General (Compliance) commented, "Such learning visits and interactions are useful in bringing Customs officers of all levels closer to our customers; enabling us to better understand their business, including their operational environment and challenges."

A key client of Singapore Customs, TNT has arranged frequent learning journeys to TNT facilities for Customs officers. These regular visits present good opportunities for the senior management and staff of TNT and

Singapore Customs to network and build relations, thus maintaining their close partnership.

In line with Singapore Customs' ongoing customer engagement efforts, learning journeys also help new personnel understand major clients better while giving Customs officers a more comprehensive idea of how the agency's policies affect business operations on the ground. Such background knowledge ultimately helps them better formulate policies and facilitate trade.

Photos courtesy of TNT



Singapore Customs' Senior Assistant Director-General Lim Teck Leong (left) with TNT Country General Manager Mr Damien Tan.



TNT representatives fielding questions from Singapore Customs officers after presenting an overview of the company's global and regional operations.

TRAINING CALENDAR

Programme	Dates
<p>SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT</p> <p>This three-day 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.</p> <p>The course comprises three modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days) • SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (Half day) • SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (Half day) <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>4 – 6 Jan 2012</p> <p>8 – 10 Feb 2012</p> <p>7 – 9 Mar 2012</p>
<p>SC200 STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME</p> <p>This one-day seminar provides an overview of Singapore's strategic goods control system and its regulations, registration procedures and permit requirements for strategic goods transactions, as well as the essentials of an internal (export control) compliance programme.</p> <p>The seminar comprises two modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control (Half day) • SC202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme (Half day) <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>24 Feb 2012</p> <p>27 Apr 2012</p>
<p>TRADERS CLINICS</p> <p>These monthly one-on-one consultation sessions provide an avenue for traders to seek advice and provide feedback on general customs procedures and services.</p>	<p>14 & 15 Dec 2011</p> <p>25 & 26 Jan 2012</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED TRADERS</p> <p>This quarterly programme is designed to equip new traders with a better understanding of customs documentation procedures, as well as the various customs schemes and services available. For enquiries, please call 6355 2000 or email customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg</p>	<p>6 Dec 2011</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS</p> <p>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 procedures for Certificates of Origin, and the compliance requirements. For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg</p>	<p>7 Dec 2011</p>

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to the Singapore Customs website at www.customs.gov.sg under "Courses for Businesses".

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

NEW MODULAR-FORMAT TRAINING FOR TRADERS

From January 2012, Singapore Customs will be launching two new programmes - SC100 Basics of Every Declarant, which will replace the Competency Programme for Businesses Part I & II, and SC200 Strategic Goods Control Programme, which replaces the Strategic Goods Control Programme for Businesses.

To better address the different training needs of individual traders, these programmes are offered in a modular format, allowing traders the flexibility of enrolling for individual modules according to their needs.

SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT

This is a three-day course comprising three modules: SC101 Customs Procedures, SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System and SC103 Rules of Origin/Free Trade Agreements. The course seeks to provide trade declarants with an overview of the customs procedures pertaining to the import and export of goods. At the end of the course, participants will have a better understanding of the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, the underlying principles for the classification of goods and the rules of origin. Traders can choose to sign up for individual modules or for the full three-day programme. Offered on a monthly basis, each run of the course can take up to 35 participants.

SC200 STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME

This is a one-day seminar comprising two modules: SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control and SC202 Essentials of Internal [Export Control] Compliance Programme. The seminar aims to enhance the industry's awareness and understanding of Singapore's strategic goods control system, the Strategic Goods (Control) Act and its regulations, the registration procedures and permit requirements for strategic goods transactions, as well as the essentials of an internal (export control) compliance programme. Traders can choose to sign up for individual modules or for the full-day seminar. Offered once every two months, each run of the seminar can take up to 60 participants.

Details of these programmes and their component modules are available at www.customs.gov.sg under "Courses for Businesses". For enquiries, please email customs_competency@customs.gov.sg



We make trade easy, fair and secure