ASYCUDA – AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR CUSTOMS DATA
STREAMLINING CUSTOMS MANAGEMENT

GLOBAL CONTEXT

Long waiting times at borders, inappropriate fees, cumbersome formalities are all serious obstacles to trade and adversely affect investment and employment. An efficient and effective customs administration is essential to the welfare of any country. It benefits the national economy in various ways: by collecting revenue, by assisting the Government to promote cross-border trade and by combating fraud and illegal trafficking of prohibited and restricted goods. It further provides the statistical information on foreign trade transactions essential for economic planning and encourages international trade. The automatic calculation of duties speeds up and simplifies the clearance process and increases State revenues.

The UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) is an ICT-based customs management system targeted at reforming the customs clearance processes of developing and middle-income countries. It computerizes and simplifies procedures. ASYCUDA has a major impact on e-business and e-government transactions, making international trade simpler and cheaper, and international markets more accessible to enterprises from developing countries. In more and more countries, ASYCUDA constitutes the core system for building a single window for international trade.

HOW CAN CUSTOMS PROCEDURES BE IMPROVED?

The UNCTAD ASYCUDA software is installed at the request of Governments and adapted to suit the national characteristics of individual customs regimes, national tariffs and legislation.

The ASYCUDA programme itself is implemented in three phases. A preparation phase identifies the areas needing reforms, such as simplification of clearance procedures, alignment of forms to international standards and modernization of the national customs law.

During the implementation phase, ASYCUDA is configured to incorporate national specificities, i.e. the coding of tariffs and related regulations and legislation, data entry of the control tables and preparation of valuation systems. A large training and capacity-building programme is associated with this phase for the transfer of skills and know-how. In the roll-out phase, various national sites are equipped with the logistical, technical and human skills to autonomously implement and manage the ASYCUDA project.

**PROGRAMME
FACTS AND FIGURES**

ASYCUDA Programme start date: 1981

Number of countries and territories benefited: 110

Ongoing activities: some 5 projects being negotiated and 45 active projects at any time

Number of countries using latest ASYCUDA version (2013–2014): 27

Number of new ASYCUDA projects or addenda signed (2013–2014): 30

Programme website: unctad.org/ASYCUDA

RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

In Afghanistan, during the last 8 years, customs revenues have increased from around $50 million in 2003 to over $950 million in 2011 – an increase of around 2,000 per cent. Also, the waiting time for trucks at the major border crossings has decreased. At Torkham, the border with Pakistan, over 90 per cent of trucks are now cleared in less than 1.5 hours, down from 18 hours in 2003.

DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

Current: Primarily beneficiary countries; 82.3 per cent financed by recipient Governments, 12.9 per cent from the European Union and 4.8 per cent by others (2013–2014)

Past: Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, European Commission, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank

ASYCUDA technical assistance projects, 2014

In 2014, 39 least developed countries, 21 landlocked developing countries and 19 small island developing States benefited from ASYCUDA programme support.