



ASYCUDA – AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR CUSTOMS DATA

STREAMLINING CUSTOMS MANAGEMENT



GLOBAL CONTEXT

Long waiting times at borders, inappropriate fees and 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.

ASYCUDA is an information and communications technology (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 electronic business and 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, trade portals, port management training and the implementation of transit and corridor management.



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 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, that is, 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 human, technical and logistical skills to autonomously implement and manage the ASYCUDA project.

The ASYCUDA software suite ensures that “*what gets measured, gets done*” (T. Peters), and that “*what gets measured, gets managed*” (P. Drucker). A new module, the ASYCUDA System for Performance Measurement, is a tool that allows customs management to measure its performance, through the provision of dynamic graphs, diagrams and tables based on live and accurate information on all customs operations, which enable management to detect inefficient practices and increase its efficiency.



RESULTS AND IMPACTS AT A GLANCE

- In *Afghanistan*, the ASYCUDA system covers more than 95 per cent of international trade in Afghanistan, producing huge benefits for the country and boosting customs' annual revenue to almost \$1 billion in 2017, compared with about \$50 million in 2003. The deployment has led to the re-organization and modernization of customs in Afghanistan, with the structure of all customs offices now reflecting the much simpler and safer process.
- The E-borders package of the ASTANA-1 system (ASYCUDA-based) was launched in *Kazakhstan* on 1 October 2017. The Minister for Finance reported to the Government that the average transit processing time by customs had decreased four times. Over 140,000 transit declarations had been processed by the end of 2017. The transit data exchange was implemented with the members of the Eurasian Economic Union.
- In *Mauritania*, where the ASYCUDA system was installed in 1981, the Director General of Mauritania Customs reported that, even though the country was undergoing a financial crisis, revenue collection



ASYCUDA technical assistance projects, 2019



In 2019, 41 African countries, 34 LDCs, 21 landlocked developing countries and 27 small island developing States benefited from ASYCUDA programme support.

had increased by 15 per cent in 2016, compared with 2015.

- Following the implementation of the ASYCUDA system at the National Tax Agency in *Angola*, customs revenue recorded an increase of more than 43 per cent in 2018 in comparison with 2017.
- *Jamaica* Customs has made substantial progress with the implementation of ASYCUDA World by bringing greater trade facilitation through the new electronic environment for the automated clearance of imported and exported goods, which involves all other regulatory agencies present at the Import–Export Inspection Centre (one-stop shop). It enhanced revenue collection by at least 18 per cent in the fiscal year 2016–17 and allowed for at least 70 per cent of its cargo released within 24 hours after submission of the customs declaration.

PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES



Scope: all regions
 Start date: 1981
 Countries and territories benefited: 121
 Ongoing activities: 5–8 projects under negotiation; 72 active projects (2018)
 Countries using latest ASYCUDA version (2019): 83
 New ASYCUDA projects or addendums signed (2018): 29
 Website: unctad.org/ASYCUDA

Sustainable Development Goals addressed:



Directly: 9, 15, 17
 Indirectly: 1, 6, 8

DONORS/FUNDING SOURCE (2018)



36.2 per cent from the World Bank, 29.8 per cent from beneficiary Governments, 29.2 per cent from regional organizations (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Southern African Development Community, Trade Mark East Africa) and 4.8 per cent from other entities (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Enhanced Integrated Framework, German Agency for International Cooperation)