



Newsletter: COMESA ASYCUDA++ Regional Project

Issue 2: April 2007

***“COMESA, ASYCUDA, EU, a Partnership
Project for Trade Facilitation in the
Region”***



ASYCUDA ++ Training Lusaka—National Project Teams from Eritrea, Seychelles & Swaziland, hard at work!



Project Activities On Target

◆ ***Equipment Tender Finalized. 1.7M Euro of computer equipment to be provided to the 5 countries***

◆ ***Asycuda ++ Training completed for Project Teams***

As explained in Newsletter 1, this EU funded project involves close cooperation between COMESA and UNCTAD to implement ASYCUDA ++ in Comoros, DRC, Eritrea, Seychelles and Swaziland.

It is worth restating the main Objectives of this important project -

- ◆ ***Increase Trade Facilitation***
- ◆ ***Improve Efficiency & Effectiveness in Customs***
- ◆ ***Provide timely & accurate trade data***
- ◆ ***Use of International / COMESA standards***

Many key activities have been undertaken since the start of the project in August 2006. The Regional Advisers have visited all the implementing countries to work out equipment

specifications /requirements and meet Customs management, stakeholders in the trading community and other Government departments to give more detail on the project.

Following the missions to the countries, a great deal of work was done to organize the tender for the computer equipment and supporting activities, such as ORACLE training. EU has provided a large equipment budget, nearly 2M Euros. So the tender procedures are inevitably complex, detailed and time consuming—to ensure transparency. The project has managed to comply with all the tender formalities and complete the process on schedule. A suitable contractor has been chosen and the contract is signed. We expect the countries to see the physical results of this work with a substantial amount of computer equipment being delivered some time in June this year for the benefit of the Customs departments in the five countries. The Customs Administrations should ideally start planning now for a proper storage area for the Equipment.

The new equipment will be a major boost for the IT organization of all the countries, especially those currently working on a mainly manual basis.

All the countries now have in place in-country ASYCUDA ++ experts recruited from the COMESA region. They are working closely with the national project teams to make the implementation strategy a reality. It is fair to say that there have been some difficulties with recruitment and retention of a few of the advisers. Hopefully there will now be stability.

The project advisers and the national teams are working on a wide range of project tasks. These include important activities such as-

- ◆ ***Streamlined Procedures***
- ◆ ***International Coding***
- ◆ ***Building System Tariff***
- ◆ ***Automatic Tax Calculation***
- ◆ ***DTI [Direct Trader Input] arrangements***
- ◆ ***Technical Configuration***
- ◆ ***Risk Management***
- ◆ ***Introduction of SAD Customs Declaration***
- ◆ ***Legal Issues***
- ◆ ***Common Taxpayer reference number***
- ◆ ***Preparing Manuals***

In depth Asycuda ++ training – both Customs functional and technical - has been completed in Lusaka for project team staff from the three Anglophone countries in the project. The Training was delivered by the Regional Advisers. The training lasted a total of seven weeks. These were detailed

intensive, participative events. Good feedback has been received from the countries. The teams now have a good understanding of the system and should be able to install, configure and maintain their national Asycuda ++ systems.

Similar technical training has been delivered to the Francophone countries – Union des Comores and DRC. Further training by the in – country UNCTAD experts is planned for them.

Another component of the project is to build and introduce a Web – based Transit interface application to reduce errors and eliminate the need for users—Customs staff and Trade—at the various points along the transit route to repetitively key in the transit declaration at each stage. A well qualified programmer has now been recruited to start work with the Regional advisers and involved parties to develop this application for testing, agreement with national administrations and implementation in the Region.

For more information you are welcome to contact the UNCTAD team via email>

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