ASYCUDA
Automated System for Customs Data

UNCTAD

ASYCUDAWorld
COVID-19 Survey

Guidelines to Customs Administrations

SUMMARY REPORT | 2021

UNITED NATIONS

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ASYCUDAWorld COVID-19 Survey

Guidelines to Customs Administrations

The fully automated environment provided by ASYCUDAWorld (AW) affords Customs, cross-border agencies and traders with the capacity to electronically submit and exchange data & documentation and computerize procedures. This enables the expediting of the clearance of imports, exports, transit trade and other trade transactions, thereby greatly reducing the need for face-to-face interaction.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to significantly affect all the facets of the international trade supply chain as well as the way the activities of the AW Implementation Project are conducted worldwide. Since March 2020, the global supply chains have been experiencing significant disruptions, including through reductions in trade volumes, declines in foreign direct investment, lower consumer goods demand, a reduction in commodity prices, and general economic decline in particular for vulnerable developing countries. The UNCTAD is fully committed to continue supporting partner countries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and recover strongly from the pandemic.

The ASYCUDA COVID-19 Customs Administration Survey was launched by UNCTAD to rapidly gather data in assessing the current conditions in the Customs Administrations, to facilitate the implementation of UNCTAD guidelines for coping with COVID-19 measures. This summary analyses data collected in 2020.

ASYCUDA COMMUNITY

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia
- Gibraltar
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Moldova
- Turkmenistan

MIDDLE EAST

- Iraq
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Palestine
- Syria
- Yemen

AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

- Anguilla
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Barbados
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Caribbean Netherlands
- Curaçao
- Dominica
- El Salvador
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Nicaragua
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turks and Caicos
- Venezuela

AFRICA

- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cabo Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Comoros
- Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- D.R. Congo
- Djibouti
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Eswatini (former Swaziland)
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Niger
- Rwanda
- Saint Helena
- Sao Tome and Principe
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Sudan
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- Cook Islands
- Fiji
- Kiribati
- Lao PDR
- Maldives
- Nauru
- Nepal
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Sri Lanka
- Timor-Leste
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu

In brief

46 Respondents

46 Countries & territories

- A high percentage of respondents still require both the electronic Customs declaration and supporting documentation to be submitted as hard copies. This is quite alarming in a pandemic situation.
- The majority of Customs Administrations do not mandate the use of online release orders by declarants which clearly illustrate that much more work is to be done with respect to facilitation of legitimate trade.
- There is a need to promote legislative and taxation reform as it relates to provisions for the use of electronic signatures and the simplification of taxation.
- A high percentage of respondents are not using self-assessment which is reflective of non-compliance/low trade facilitation.
- There is a dire need for the development and implementation of an ASYCUDA Change Management Strategy to assist Customs and Trade Administrations with the necessary transition to electronic trade.
- There is a very positive indication that Customs Administrations are extensively utilizing ASYCUDAWorld to submit cargo declarations.
- A high percentage of jurisdictions have removed tariffs on medical supplies illustrating very strong policy implementations in this area.
- Most Customs Administrations have changed AW taxation rules for the removal of tariffs.
- Customs Administrations must be commended for the high level of installation and deployment of ASYCUDA reporting facilities for trade impact analysis.

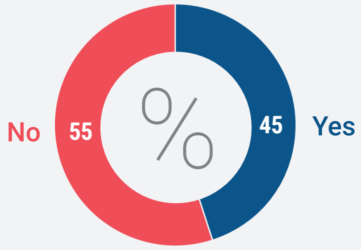
Promotion of a **paperless** environment

Use of Electronic Signatures

Notwithstanding the capacity of the automated system, a significant (55%) of respondents do not use electronic signature.

It appears that in some jurisdictions, although administrations are fully aware of the availability of the e-signature feature on AW, many have delayed the implementation due to absence of supporting legislative provisions or have deemed the username on the SAD as being acceptable.

Does the Customs Administration accept electronic signatures in lieu of handwritten signatures? Responses



"The law is not clear on e-signatures"…

"For the moment not yet"…

"Does not require declarations to be physically signed for submission"…

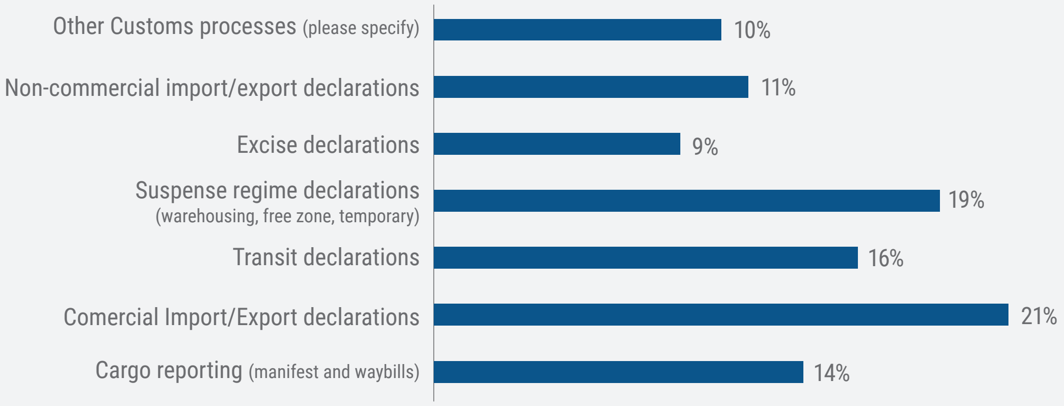
"It is under process"… "Not yet implemented"

Use of Scanned Documents

A few respondents informed that they were processing certificates and permits from regulatory agencies through the AW electronic single window.

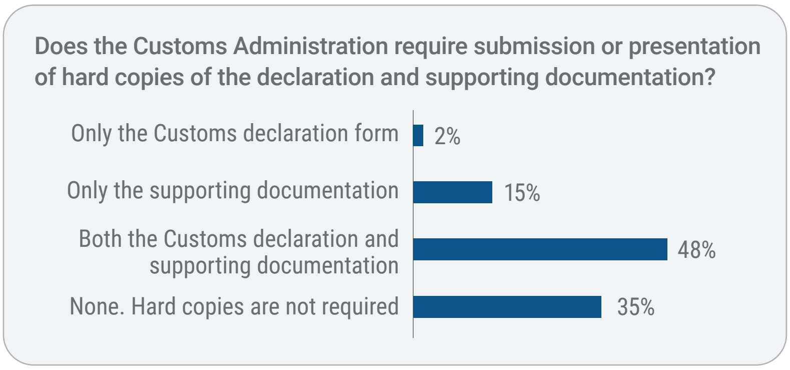
It is also observed that the AW scanned documents feature is mostly used for Commercial Import and Export regimes.

Please select the main processes where the Customs Administration is presently using the AW feature to upload scanned documents (i.e. ancillary/supporting), thus avoiding submission of hard copy documents? Select all that apply.



Others still required hard copies for the clearance of cargo to the extent of disabling the scanned documents upload feature due to storage limitations.

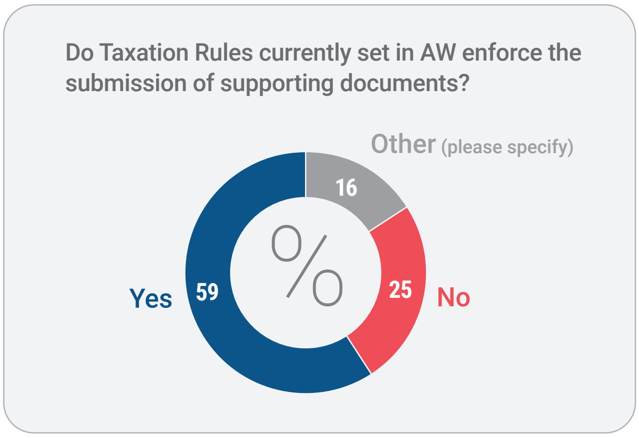
Very few respondents (9%) make use of the AW scanned documents feature for Excise declarations.



Additionally, a high percentage of respondents (48%) mandate the requirement for both the electronic Customs declaration and supporting documentation to be submitted as hard copies.

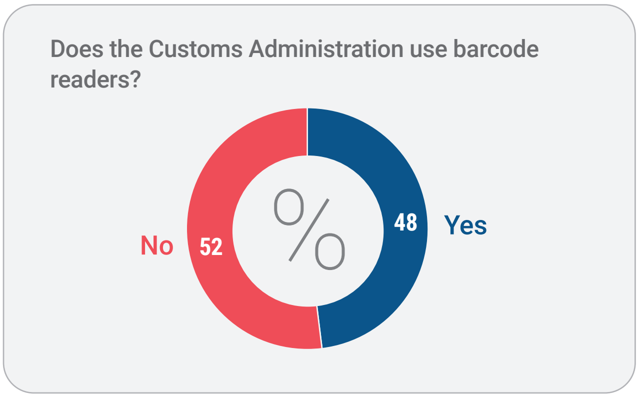
Taxation Rules

The survey underscored the dire need for Customs Administrations to reconfigure taxation rules in order to mandate the submission of supporting documents. A non-enforcement in this category of 16% is much too high to adequately support a fully automated/paperless environment.



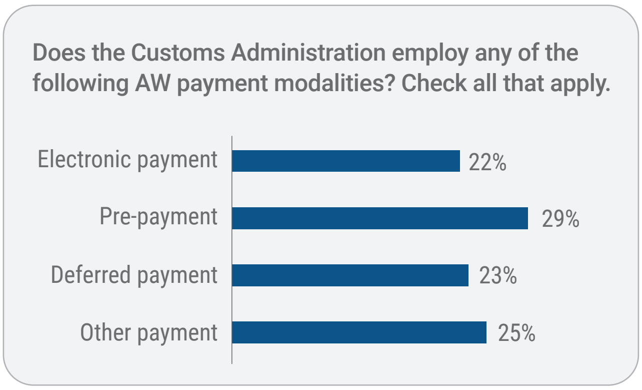
Use of Barcode Readers

The survey revealed that less than half of administrations (52%) require the use of barcode readers.



AW Payment Modalities

A few respondents take advantage of key trade facilitation and revenue enhancement AW modalities. e-Payment (at 22%) and deferred payment (at 23%) are seldom used as payment options.



"Traditional payment in cash or check"

"In the stage of testing with banks for the electronic payment"

"The GRA is currently in the process of finalizing the Electronic Payment Facility for Piloting"

"Payment using the swipe machine for the bank card or credit card"

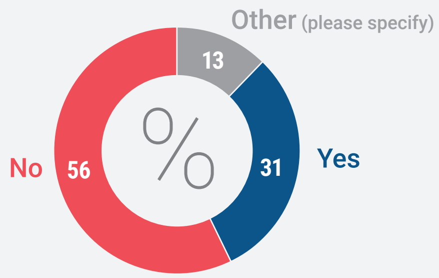
"Deferred payment is used in specially authorized circumstances for example - Post Office."

"We are in the process of e-Payment. We are waiting for national e-Payment gateway solution."

Online Release Orders

The majority of Customs Administrations (56%) do not mandate the use of online release orders by declarants.

Does the Customs Administration allow declarants to generate the Release Order (online)?



Automated write-off of licences, permits and certificates (LPCs) issued by other Government Agencies

The majority of customs-centric Single Windows based on AW (81%) do not auto-write off other Government Agencies (OGAs) LPCs.

If the country has implemented a Single Window System, does AW electronically consume (automated write-off) licences, permits and certificates issued by other Government Agencies?