

GCI - PILOT CUSTOMS OFFICERS CURRICULUM FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

GreenCustoms



Introduction

This curriculum provides a structure for a comprehensive training on the control of the international trade of environmentally sensitive commodities (ESCs) in the Spanish-speaking Latin America and Caribbean region, so that trained customs officers can perform effectively in control situations linked to these commodities. It is also expected that the inclusion of this curriculum in customs officers' training will help raise awareness amongst them on environmental issues.

This curriculum has been developed by the Green Customs Initiative (GCI). Launched in 2004, the GCI is a partnership of international entities cooperating to prevent the illegal trade and facilitate the legal trade of ESCs covered by relevant trade-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as well as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (the Chemical Weapons Convention or CWC). These commodities include ozone depleting substances (ODS), toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, endangered species and certain living-modified organisms.

The GCI aims to provide support to national training institutes to appropriate this pilot curriculum, and to adapt and integrate it into their regular training programs.

Target audience

Candidates to become customs officers and active customs officers.

Expected outcomes

For customs officers:

- Increased awareness among customs officers regarding trade-related environmental issues.
- Enhanced capacity of customs officers to prevent the illegal trade and to facilitate the legal trade of ESCs.

For customs training institutes:

- Improved capacity to deliver training on, and to integrate green customs into national customs training programmes.

For countries and the region:

- Institutionalization of the green customs training to ensure consistent and continuous learning in the region.
- Enhanced compliance of States in Spanish-speaking Latin America and Caribbean with the relevant agreements to which they are Parties.

Learning objectives

The general learning objectives are to:

- i) Know and understand relevant information and concepts regarding:

¹ The curriculum is based on a needs assessment and consultations with Spanish speaking countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean, but has been drafted in both the Spanish and English languages.

- the GCI in general;
- each of the agreements included in the GCI;
- the national implementation legislation relating to the specific agreements;
- the role of customs officers in the control of ESCs;
 - » health and security issues related to ESCs;
 - » identification and tariff classification of ESCs; and,
 - » prevention of the illegal traffic of ESCs.

ii) Develop skills regarding the application of the relevant information and concepts mentioned above to ESCs customs control.



Source: Pixabay

Curriculum

Organization of the units

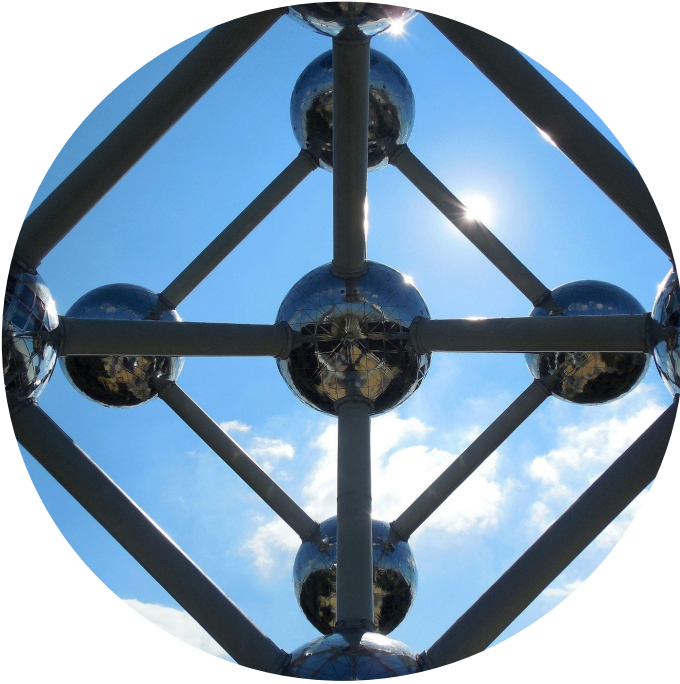
The pilot curriculum consists of 15 units. The main contents are detailed below:

1. Introduction
2. The Green Customs Initiative (GCI) and issues relating to trade and the environment
3. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and its national implementation
4. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its national implementation
5. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its national implementation
6. The Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and its national implementation
7. The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and its national implementation
8. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and its national implementation
9. The Minamata Convention on Mercury and its national implementation
10. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (the Chemical Weapons Convention or CWC) and its national implementation
11. Role of customs officers regarding the control of ESCs
12. Health and safety regarding ESCs
13. Identification and tariff classification of ESCs
14. Preventing the illegal traffic in ESCs
15. Knowledge assessment

Contents

The contents are organized in a way to achieve a gradual approach to matters of interest for customs officers.

- The first unit is an introduction to the course setting out the objective, methodology and expected results of the course.
- Unit 2 introduces the GCI partnership and the topics relating to the trade and environment discourse covered by MEAs and the CWC, which are later presented more in detail in the following units.
- Units 3 to 10 are reserved to separately consider the agreements that are the focus of the GCI. In these units, the presentation of each agreement includes: an introduction to the specific environmental problem, the main existing control measures, the regulated commodities, the national implementing legislation and the competent national authority.
- With this foundation of specific knowledge on the agreements, the curriculum moves on, in units 11 to 14, to customs-specific information to make the link between customs and the relevant agreements explicit: the role of customs officers in the control of ESCs (unit 11); health and security issues regarding ESCs (unit 12); identification and tariff classification applicable to ESCs (unit 13); and, preventing the illegal traffic of ESCs (unit 14).
- Finally, recognizing the need to first understand the basic information in units 2 to 13, the unit on the prevention of illegal traffic is the last thematic unit, followed at the end by the knowledge assessment.



Teaching methodology

It is proposed that the teaching methodology be both theoretical and practical, with emphasis on the use of real cases to exemplify the theoretical content presented as well as practical exercises on the simulation of control situations. Where the participants are active customs officers, they can benefit from sharing information on and discussing control situations they have experienced. This approach can obviously not be followed with participants who are candidates to become customs officers. In addition, it is suggested that trainers also use visual means (e.g. photographs and videos) to better explain the information.

Assessment

It is proposed that a knowledge assessment take place before the training to serve as baseline for the progress achieved at the end of the training. The curriculum includes partial assessments in each unit (units 2-14) and a final knowledge assessment (unit 15). National training institutes can adopt the type of assessment that best suits their needs and teaching guidelines.

Trainer's profile

The content of the different units of the curriculum requires trainers with a specific background and expertise. Units 3-10 require in-depth knowledge of each specific agreement and the national implementing legislation. Consequently, the trainers can be officers of the competent national authority of each agreement (and of course, they can also be customs officers with specific knowledge and training on these matters). Units 11-14 require knowledge about specific customs matters applied to the control of ESCs, thus customs experts should deliver these parts of the training. Unit 2, which is introductory to the GCI, requires a trainer with comprehensive knowledge of both, environmental and customs issues and of the GCI.

The course could be delivered entirely by a customs trainer who meets all the knowledge conditions for each unit of the curriculum or could be delivered by different experts meeting the specific requirements of the different units, as explained in the previous paragraph. In that case, a customs trainer, with general knowledge of both environmental and customs matters should have the overall facilitation and coordination role for the training.

Curriculum outline

The outline of each unit is shown below, including an indication of the expected duration for each unit. Training institutes may make changes to the duration, depending on their needs and as they deem necessary.

1) Introduction [0.5 hrs]

- i. General presentation
- ii. Objectives
- iii. Expected results
- iv. Methodology
- v. Teaching materials

2) The Green Customs Initiative (GCI) and issues relating to trade and the environment [1.5 hrs]

- i. Introduction to the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the CWC included in the GCI [brief description of each agreement; this goes into further detail in units 3-10]
- ii. Introduction to the role of customs in compliance with the agreements included in the GCI [brief description; this goes into further detail in unit 11]
- iii. Overview of the problem of the illegal traffic of ESCs [brief description; this goes into further detail in unit 14]
- iv. The GCI and its partners: background, mandate and activities
- v. Implementation of the GCI in the region
- vi. Introduction to the agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other trade-related global and regional agreements and issues relating to the environment
- vii. References to information resources and further reading
- viii. Knowledge check

3) The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and its national implementation [2.5 hrs]

- i. The issue and its link to the environment
- ii. Basic information about the agreement (background, negotiations, place and year of signature, entry into force, relationship with other agreements, etc.)
- iii. Objectives of the agreement
- iv. Situation on ratifications/accession (general and national)
- v. Regulated species
- vi. Restrictions on international trade
- vii. Other measures and obligations for the parties
- viii. National implementing legislation

- ix. Competent national authority
- x. Specific measures introduced in national legislation regarding the import and export of the species subjected to CITES
- xi. The role of customs in the implementation of the agreement
- xii. Procedures provided for the exchange of information with customs (including the identification of the official acting as liaison with customs)
- xiii. Overview of the situation of trade in species regulated by the agreement (at global, regional and national levels)
- xiv. References to information resources and further reading
- xv. Knowledge check

4) The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its national implementation [2 hrs]

- i. The issue and its link to the environment
- ii. Basic information about the agreement (background, negotiations, place and year of signature, entry into force, relationship with other agreements, etc.)
- iii. Objectives of the agreement
- iv. Situation on ratifications/accession (general and national)
- v. Regulated living modified organisms (LMOs)
- vi. Restrictions on international trade
- vii. Other measures and obligations for the parties
- viii. National implementing legislation
- ix. Competent national authority
- x. Specific measures introduced in national legislation regarding the import and export of the LMOs subjected to the Cartagena Protocol
- xi. The role of customs in the implementation of the agreement

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