

ASYCUDA++ IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT BULLETIN

DECEMBER, 2004

Background

In an earlier bulletin issued out in June, 2004, we covered several aspects around the implementation of ASYCUDA++ in the Customs Business Centre. These included the key features of the new CBC configuration and process, the challenges faced and the rollout to other stations beginning with the transfer of transactions from the old Kampala Longroom to the CBC. This bulletin will expand on those aspects especially the migration of warehousing from Kampala Longroom to the Customs Business Centre.

Official Opening of the Customs Business Centre

On 23rd September, 2004, Uganda Revenue Authority celebrated 13 years of existence. Amongst the highlights of this occasion, the Customs Business Centre was officially opened by the Chairman of the Uganda Manufacturers Association, Mr. Abid Alam. Several invited guests honoured the occasion on that day including representatives from different associations like Uganda Freight Forwarders Association (UFFA), Uganda Clearing & Forwarding Association (UCFA), Kampala City Traders Associations (KACITA), Uganda Import & Export Traders Association (UGIETA) and representatives of Direct Trader Input (DTI) centres.

The occasion was also blessed with the presence of the acting Commissioner General and several commissioners from all the departments. The Customs & Excise Commissioner Mrs. Allen Kagina highlighted several Customs Client Service Standards that would be applicable to entry processing at the Customs Business Centre from 27th September, 2004. These standards which emphasized the maximum time that the entries of different regimes would spend in the CBC, were given to the invited guests as

a commitment to good performance by the staff.

Preparation for the Migration of Warehousing from Kampala Longroom to the Customs Business Centre

For the migration of warehousing from Kampala Longroom to the CBC, the team studied and analysed the previous entry processing path in the Longroom and from it re-designed another process similar to the one at the CBC used for clearance of IM4's. It included the normal flow of entries through the Lodgement window to Control and to the respective selectivity lanes before going to the release desk.

Sensitization and training for Warehouse operators, Customs staff and Clearing Agents was conducted by the team. It included the new warehousing process, the use of specification codes, the automatic allocation and cancellation of bond guarantees (CB3 & CB6) and the proper fill in of the declaration.

To ease the amount of work transferred to the Customs Business Centre, the team in consultation with the Commissioner Customs decided to migrate warehousing in phases.

Implementation of warehousing in the Customs Business Centre (CBC)

The first phase which began on 27th September, 2004 included only 4 companies for the pilot study. These companies included both general and private warehouses. The aim of the pilot was to analyze the effect of the new process and the correct use of specification codes and the automatic calculation of the bond guarantees.

After the success of the pilot phase, the team in conjunction with the Incharge Warehousing

decided to migrate another 25 private warehouses to the CBC on November 9th, 2004. These companies were expected to follow the same processing path that the four companies of the pilot had followed. All the mishaps that were discovered during the pilot phase were corrected before the addition of the 25 warehouses.

On the 6th December 2004, full migration of warehousing from Kampala Longroom to CBC was started. This implied that all new entries for warehousing were to be lodged in the CBC. Nevertheless, all the old entries that had been lodged in Kampala Longroom were to have out of warehouse entries created in the same long room. These entries however have been given a deadline of 15th January, 2005 to have either been cleared for home consumption or the entries cancelled and re-lodged in the Customs Business Centre.

The new ASYCUDA++ version 1.18b and other aspects of the process in the Customs Business centre

The ASYCUDA++ version that Uganda had been using since 2002 was 1.17d. With consultation with the Commissioner, the project team on 27th November, 2004 began the upgrade of ASYCUDA++ from that previous version 1.17d to 1.18b. The upgrade was done between 27th November, 2004 and 5th December, 2004 for all client computers.

The new features of the upgrade included the consolidation of the creation and querying of the prepayment accounts, the release and exit of goods by the officers at the Warehouse or transit shed using the module MODSHD.

Other aspects that came along with the upgrade was the introduction of the new declaration printout. This printout was an exact replica of the ASYCUDA++ declaration screen as compared to the former printout whose boxes did not match the ASYCUDA++ screen.

Further more, there was introduction of Importer prepayment accounts. When the implementation of ASYCUDA++ began in the

CBC, the prepayment accounts belonged to the agents. However, as the months rolled by, the team was faced with reconciliation problems. Therefore, a decision was made to migrate from use of the agent accounts to importer accounts. This greatly eased the reconciliation problems that the team faced and now the agent had to ensure that his importer pays the taxes on the correct account.

Planned rollout for the Eastern Customs Stations

Plans are underway to rollout ASYCUDA++ to Malaba, Busia and Jinja at the beginning of the year 2005. Civil works are being done to improve the sites in preparation for the implementation of ASYCUDA++ by February, 2005.

Other preparations include training of the users at those sites and this hopefully will take place at the end of January and beginning of February, 2005 before the implementation of ASYCUDA++.