

**National Workshop
On Time Release Study
Kathmandu, 17-19 March 2015
REPORT**

Proceedings

1. A National Workshop on Time Release Study (TRS) was organized in Kathmandu on 17-19 March 2015 jointly by the Department of Customs (DOC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Customs Organization (WCO). The DOC officials, officials from other government agencies, representatives of the private sector, Customs agents, and a non-governmental organization participated in the workshop. The initiative is funded by ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction technical assistance project. Following the resolutions reached at the National Workshop on Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism (TTFMM)¹ Program (April 2014), DOC had designated Birgunj and Mechi as the two first Customs offices to embark on the TRS. A number of the workshop participants were thus drawn from these two locations, some of whom are included in the 20-member core group for the TRS. The list of the participants is in **Annex 1**.
2. Mr. Nabaraj Bhandari, Revenue Secretary, Ministry of Finance, delivered the keynote address and emphasized the importance of partnership among all actors involved in trade to tackle challenges in trade facilitation, and expressed support to the TRS exercise, underlining the government's commitment to translate its findings into policy actions. The opening remarks were made by Mr. Sishir Kumar Dhungana, Director General, DOC; Mr. Oluimo da Silva, Technical Attaché, WCO; and Ms. Sonoko Sunayama, Economist, South Asia Department, ADB. Mr. Dhungana cited the *Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan 2013-2017*, to reiterate DOC's commitment to conduct the TRS and called upon other stakeholders to support this endeavor to be a success.
3. **Session 1: WCO Trade Facilitation.** Mr. Oluimo da Silva delivered an overview of relevant WCO trade facilitation tools and instruments, ranging from the Revised Kyoto Convention, SAFE Framework of Standards, AEO Compendium, Data Model, Single Window to TRS. He also highlighted WCO's initiatives on trade facilitation and emphasized their benefits, which could be enjoyed not only by the Customs but also by all government agencies, donor institutions and the private sector. Furthermore, reference was made to the 2013 World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement, in which TRS is identified as one tool to monitor the clearance process at a regular interval.
4. **Session 2: Time Release Study (TRS): An Overview.** Mr. Shigeaki Katsu, WCO Expert and Trainer and Researcher at Japan Customs Training Institute, Ministry of Finance, presented an overview of TRS and introduced its purpose and methodology. He explained that the objective of the TRS was to identify bottlenecks affecting trade processes and that the TRS results could directly guide implementation of measures to facilitate trade, thereby bringing benefits to all stakeholders. He also shared other countries' experiences on TRS implementation from Thailand, Malaysia and Japan.
5. **Session 3: Time Release Study (TRS), Process Mapping.** Mr. da Silva gave the presentation on TRS Process Mapping which provided the whole picture on how to prepare TRS in an effective and efficient manner. Examples were drawn from Kenya and Uganda as a regional experience, and Angola as a national experience. During the discussions in this session and others, a particular emphasis was made on the need to start the first TRS exercise within a manageable scope, involving limited actors. Lessons from other countries show that the modest scope at the initial stage would help lay grounds for the exercise's gradual expansion to a broader one. From this standpoint, an advice was given to the Nepal participants to consider conducting the very first TRS with possible involvement of the fewest stakeholders involved in the clearance process, while sharing the TRS proceedings and findings with

¹ The TTFMM program examines the trade barriers through the combined use of performance measurement instruments and tools, such as Business Process Analysis, TRS and Time Cost and Distance.

other stakeholders, particularly those represented at the workshop. The trainers also highlighted that the methodology of the TRS envisages participation of diverse stakeholders beyond the Customs, especially as the country repeats the study and matures in the regular conduct of TRS.

6. **Session 4: Presentation on the National Customs Clearance Process.** Mr. Mimangsa Adhikari, Director, Customs Reform and Modernization Section, DOC made a presentation on the subject. He introduced the participants to the organizational structure of DOC and gave an illustrated presentation of the Customs clearance process, to be used as a basis for developing the TRS Process Mapping in Nepal.
7. **Session 5: Presentation on the Flow of Cargo.** Mr. Rajan Sharma, President of the Nepal Freight Forwarders Association, made a presentation on the flow of cargo from a global supply chain management perspective. He shared various business processes with wide coverages, taking into consideration not only *time* but also *cost* as well as *documentation*, in the context of international trade and logistics.
8. **Sessions 6 and 7: Discussion on How to Draft and Validate the Flow Chart and Drafting and Validation of the Flow Chart.** During the combined session, Mr. Katsu first gave an overview of how to draw the TRS Process Mapping Flow Chart. The participants were then divided into three groups—each with a mixed composition of Customs, other government offices, the private sector and a non-governmental organization—and were assigned to draft a flow chart in the modes of road cargo, railway cargo and air cargo, respectively. A representative from each group presented the draft flow chart as an output of the exercise. Participants provided valuable comments and observations to each draft chart, which are expected to be reflected in the later revision and fine-tuning, once the TRS implementation commences.
9. **Sessions 8 and 9: Overview of the WCO TRS Software and How to Use WCO TRS Software (Customs officers from Nepal Customs only).** This combined session was held at the DOC's IT training room, dedicated to the DOC management and Customs officers who constitute the TRS core group members. Mr. Katsu presented the overview of the WCO TRS Software by introducing and demonstrating its three main functions: (i) Developing Questionnaire, (ii) Collecting Data, and (iii) Analyzing & Developing Report. The participants experienced a hands-on tutorial on the Software, testing some of its main functions, individually on their assigned computer stations. The participants tackled practical exercises and learned from concrete examples to familiarize themselves with the Software.
10. **Session 10: Development of the National TRS Action Plan.** At the outset of the session, a brief presentation on the TTFMM was delivered on behalf of UNESCAP by Mr. Shyam Dahal, ADB Trade Facilitation Consultant, to introduce the participants to the ongoing regional program, under which the TRS would feed into a broader study on corridor-based analysis on trade barriers. Mr. Katsu then conducted the plenary on TRS Action Plan Framework and provided examples on steps to be included in developing the TRS Implementation Action Plan. The participants engaged in an active discussion to formulate the draft TRS Action Plan for Nepal for further refinement at a later stage. The draft was adopted by consensus as attached.

Adoption of the Report

11. The Workshop participants unanimously adopted the Report.

Closing of the Workshop

12. Mr. Moti Bahadur Shrees, Representative, National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committee, and Mr. Resham Pokharel, General Secretary, Export Council of Nepal presented the concluding remarks on behalf of the participants. The closing remarks were made by Mr. Adhikari, Mr. Dhungana, Mr. da Silva, and Ms. Sunayama.