

BOMCA 9

Border Management Programme in Central Asia (9th phase)

Newsletter №1 (2017)

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BOMCA overview

Since its launch in 2003, the various phases of the BOMCA Programme have focused on capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors, improving border management systems and eliminating drug trafficking across the Central Asia region. Each new phase of BOMCA was designed to gradually build upon and consolidate the results achieved during the preceding phases of the Programme. During its earlier phases, the Programme channelled its resources towards creating modern border management infrastructure in 5 Central Asian countries.

Capitalising on the success of previous phases, this 9th phase intends to continue interventions in the area of institutional development, management of migration flows and trade facilitation. Its overall objective is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of border management in Central Asia by introducing advanced elements of Integrated Border Management (IBM), assisting governments in developing and reforming their migration governance, mobility and trade facilitation policies, and strengthening capacities of Border and Migration Agencies, and thus contributing to enhanced security and economic development at the national and regional levels.

The 9th phase of the BOMCA Programme was launched in June 2015 for 36 months with a total budget of 4 954 784.93 Euro.



Dear friends,

Due to its geopolitical position, economical potential and historical traditions, the Republic of Kazakhstan is an active participant in international integration and global economic processes. The economy of Kazakhstan, which is located in the centre of the Eurasian continent - between the markets of Europe and East and South-East Asia, largely depends on the effective use of attractive transit opportunities by the State. Integration into the world transport system requires maximum free movement of goods and vehicles and provision of services at the level of international standards. In an effort to create a favourable climate for international trade in the country, the state revenue authorities of Kazakhstan give priority to improving customs administration and eliminating existing administrative barriers through improving the technical infrastructure at checkpoints, automating business processes, introducing an effective risk management system and a single window, negotiations with the customs authorities of foreign states

on the mutual exchange of information, recognition of authorised economic operators and mutual recognition of customs control.

Donor organisations provide great assistance in successful implementation of the assigned tasks, among which the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) plays one of the leading roles. Cooperation with BOMCA started in 2003. It has become for us a programme gathering on its platform all the border, customs and migration agencies of the Central Asian countries, providing them with methodological assistance in improving national legislation, assistance in developing the capacity of both the agencies themselves and the professional skills of their employees.

It is difficult to overestimate the scope of the assistance provided over the 14 years of BOMCA's existence. Every year, the Programme is developing and gaining momentum: since the start of the 9th phase more than 30 employees of Kazakhstan's revenue agencies have taken part in six national and regional seminars, and two study tours to the Republic of Latvia.

Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the State Revenue Committee of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I would like to express my special gratitude to the BOMCA Programme for the support provided and wish it further success.

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Component 1: Institutional development of border management agencies

Border and customs training institutions convene regular session

The first quarter of 2017 was marked by a number of the various events aiming to strengthen the sustainable capacity of the border agencies in the region. These efforts were concentrated on developing human resources (cadre) policies and administrative management, and following the principles of IBM in theory and practice, in compliance with international law enforcement standards and norms.

From 27-28 February a regional workshop for border protection and customs training institutions of Central Asian countries was held in Bishkek. The event gathered delegates from all five Central Asian countries to discuss the joint approach and continuous cooperation of training institutions towards the development of the unique, harmonised, and efficient training system for border



guards and customs officers in the Central Asian region. The workshop was facilitated by experts from the State Border Guard of Latvia and Riga Technical University.

The meeting built upon the results of the previous year and the experts jointly with the CA representatives reviewed the progress of implementation of the action points agreed in 2016, as well as defining the next actions for 2017. The experts presented and discussed current train-

ing systems in CA countries and introduced innovative approaches and methodological tools such as distance learning systems. The professionals also identified existing needs, gaps and best practices in training processes and defined topics on training curricula where exchange of trainers and students could be organised in the future.



BOMCA facilitates distance learning in Kyrgyzstan

BOMCA technical experts visited Kyrgyzstan in the beginning of March and presented distance learning system, its capabilities and advantages to the national partners - the State Border Service and the Military Armed Forces Institute.

The experts met the management and IT staff of the Border Service and the Military Institute, visited Border Service Training Centres in Osh and Novopokrovka, tested internet capacities and assessed technical needs, explored different technical solutions for implementation and tested the equipment available.

The first pilot distance lecture is planned for autumn 2017, when a lecturer from the Latvian Border College in Rezekne will deliver a lecture to Kyrgyz trainees.



Videoconferencing and lessons taught via video will provide students and teachers with an innovative learning experience that com-

bines high-definition video and audio tools - officers and teachers will be able to connect to students in real time without physically attending the classroom. The system will follow the best practices and innovations that e-learning offers. IT will connect national training institutions to each other, and also facilitate guest lecturing.



International standards on human resources and financial planning presented in Turkmenistan



Between 14-16 March BOMCA conducted a national workshop on human resources management and financial planning and control for relevant partners from the customs, border and phytosanitary agencies of Turkmenistan. An EU expert team consisting of senior management representatives from the State Revenue Service and the State Border Service of Latvia brought their

knowledge and expertise to share with Turkmen partners.

The Turkmen partners in turn presented their current practices in HR and financial management. At the same time, they were introduced to the EU MS practices in areas of intra-service management such as development of fiscal discipline, budget planning and control, procurement systems, remuneration and social benefits.

The benefits of the workshop were recognised by the Turkmen experts in terms of improvement in efficiency of human resources and finance management, which constitutes the core of the effective functioning of the entire agency.

This is the last event of this kind in the region and it is planned to follow it with on-the-job trainings on topics identified during national workshops.



Kazakhstani educational programmes evaluated for WCO compliance



Between 14-16 March BOMCA Technical Mission experts visited Astana to evaluate the compatibility of the existing customs officer training system with World Customs Organization (WCO) professional standards and recommendations of the European Commission Directorate-

General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD). Mr. Aldis Čeveris and Mr. Aivars Gulbis, Associate Professors at the International Institute of Business and Customs at Riga Technical University, visited Kazakh National University to discuss the existing training cur-

ricula, methodology, and resources used at the institution.

BOMCA experts together with teachers made a detailed analysis of the institution's existing training programme, prepared a comparative table containing the WCO professional standards, and examined the programme in terms of compliance with the standards.

Based on the assessment carried out, the expert team is developing the list of requirements and documents to be submitted to the World Customs Organization for achieving accreditation, which will be the marker for the institution's alignment with international standards.



State Border Guard
Republic of Latvia

Central Asian border agencies reinforcing ethical standards and anti-corruption measures



In April, a team of European experts visited Astana, Dushanbe, and Tashkent to hold a series of workshops for border agencies on law enforce-

ment ethics and the fight against corruption. The team composed of international and national experts looked at how the agencies can put in place a comprehensive, balanced and tailored package of measures. They explored the range of instruments available to strengthen a culture of integrity, deter and detect unethical behaviour, take corrective action and build public trust: ethical codes, risk-based strategies, laws and

regulations, anti-corruption agencies, ethics training, disclosure of income, assets and interests, administrative simplification, control and audit, whistleblowing, investigation, prosecution, and sanctions. This BOMCA activity is aimed at improving the effectiveness of the border management system in Central Asia by introducing anti-corruption measures in accordance with international law enforcement standards and norms.

Border protecting and customs educational institutions explore EU best practices in education



Between 5-10 April, workshops for border guard and customs training institutions from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were held, gathering key partners from higher educational institutions forming border dele-

gates and customs officers as well as training centres for the border and customs services. The events were facilitated by experts from the State Border Guard College of Latvia, Riga Technical University, and the Lithuanian Customs Training Centre.

During the workshop, participants presented and discussed the current educational systems for border guards and customs officers, identifying the existing needs, gaps and best practices of the training processes. European ex-

perts introduced advanced practices in European educational programmes, including standards, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions, and presented relevant tools, instruments, and country examples. Based on the workshop's findings, the expert team will elaborate and share recommendations for the further development of educational programmes and capacity building of border protection and customs training institutions in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Component 2: Enhancing migration governance structures and regimes

Enhancing the methodology of identification and profiling of foreign terrorists in Kyrgyzstan

Further development of the legal and procedural instruments, introduction of advanced practices of cross-border mobility and addressing the multifaceted challenges caused by mixed migration flows are the key objectives of Component 2. A series of workshops and technical missions have been carried out.

A national workshop on terrorist identification and profiling was held in Bishkek between 14-16 March, gathering professionals dealing with identification and profiling issues from the State Security Service, the



Ministry of Interior and the Border Service. Its main objectives were to improve the understanding of criminal and terrorist behaviour and seek improvements in the methodology of identification and profiling, improve data collection and analysis skills, seek new insights, and share

knowledge and methods to cope with threats.

National and European experts shared their knowledge and experience in passenger profiling with special emphasis on identification of foreign terrorist fighters. This included a detailed overview of a set of psychological, socio-economic, and physical and/or racial attributes that fighters may exhibit. The features that make up a terrorist profile and tendencies that indicate terrorism were analysed and a list of terrorist indicators was amended.



Component 3: Improving the efficiency of goods flow at the borders

Mechanisms of control and import certification discussed in Astana

The 3rd Component of BOMCA 9 aims to introduce measures improving flow of goods efficiency at the borders, and thus facilitating regional and international trade. Workshops and working meetings are being held with national counterparts to reviews national legislation and its compatibility with international standards and agreements.



On 7 February, a BOMCA expert team met with key national partners

from phytosanitary, veterinary, quarantine and sanitary-epidemiological agencies from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to jointly assess the existing practices and procedures of risk analysis and control of imported animals, plants and food based on Kazakhstan's experience as a World Trade Organization (WTO) member. Participants discussed possible advancement of a legislative framework that promotes a more harmonised approach to import control and creates a more transparent, up-to-date and effective system of import and export controls, allowing more coherence in and integration of the different control mechanisms and approaches in place. Kazakhstan's experience of WTO accession in terms of

sanitary and phytosanitary measures was assessed as an example for WTO candidate countries. The European experts gave an overview on the main principles of trade facilitation measures at border checkpoints and presented good practices. Aspects such as legislation, control programmes and procedures, decision criteria and action, appropriate facilities, equipment, transportation and communication tools for risk-based import controls, trained personnel, and accredited laboratory capacities were emphasised as the main conditions for trade facilitation improvement. Based on the workshop results, a set of recommendations will be prepared in relation to measures necessary for WTO accession.

E-customs and its advantages the focus of technical assistance mission

Between February and May a BOMCA expert team visited Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to conduct workshops for the IT departments of the national partners' customs services.

The experts provided detailed information and explanation on international developments within the EU, including opportunities, challenges and potential solutions in the area of cross-border e-commerce and digital customs, and presented related tools and instruments, country examples, case studies and both ongoing work and that envisaged for the future.

The national partners too shared their perspective, in particular giving accounts of how they have been adapting to the growing e-commerce environment and providing respective practical experiences/best practices relating to the implementation of various ICT solutions. This BOMCA activity is aimed at introducing measures to improve the efficiency of controls and procedures applicable to goods and means of transport crossing the borders and in so doing facilitate regional and international trade.

The workshops were very well received by participants and

raised a lot of interest. Participants acquired an enhanced understanding of issues relating to cross-border commerce and digital customs as well as relevant instruments and tools in terms of their effective and harmonised implementation at the national or regional level.



Assessing Kyrgyzstan's capacities in compliance with GSP+ provisions and requirements



The decision of the European Union to grant GSP+ status to the Kyrgyz Republic opened up new potential in economic relations and offered opportunities for Kyrgyzstan to increase and diversify its exports and strengthen its economy. The GSP+ means full removal of tariffs on more than 6,000 product categories, Kyrgyz exporters are now able supply to the European Union at a zero tariff rate agricultural products such as fruits, processed fruits (canned fruits, juice), dried fruits (walnuts, almonds, pistachios), food prod-

ucts, tobacco, textiles, felt products, clothing (including leather), and carpets. On 25 November 2015 the European Commission adopted the proposal to grant inclusion in the extended Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) to Kyrgyzstan.

To assess the current state of play in terms of Kyrgyz compliance with EU importation rules and to recommend further measures to be undertaken, BOMCA held an advisory mission. Between 28-31 March European experts met partners from the Ministry of Economy, Customs, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the State Inspection on Veterinary and Phytosanitary Security. They assessed the situation in issuance and control of certificates of origin, veterinary and phytosani-

tary certificates, and quality certificates.

BOMCA experts made detailed presentations on GSP+ rules of origin, which were followed by practical examples and advice on the determination of preferential origin of goods. Existing EU practices on origin-related issues - main legal acts, basic principles of the GSP+ rules of preferential origin, preferential origin documents, administrative cooperation - were introduced, and practical examples and clarification of certain aspects of determining the origin of goods were given. Based on the mission results, experts are preparing a set of recommendations for further measures and improvements to be taken by Kyrgyzstan in order to comply with the GSP+ rules and requirements.

Central Asian customs authorities advance their risks management systems



A series of working meetings aimed at sharing international experience in administering risk management systems were held between December 2016 and April 2017 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, bringing to-

gether international experts on risk management and customs officers. Participants reviewed examples of good practice from international experience and identified ways to enhance customs clearance procedures and facilitate trade in the region.

The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to discuss topics of common interest and issues related to risk management, while exchanging views on their respective national experiences and best practices. The workshop focused on the operational aspects of risk manage-

ment, emphasising field operations, risk profiling, aspects relating to the use of pre-arrival information in dealing with economic operators and their activities, amongst other area.

The national experts highlighted the importance of best practices, noting that the subsequent enhanced efficiency of customs procedures at all levels would promote regional economic growth. The workshop is part of the BOMCA project efforts to assist Central Asian countries in facilitating trade in the region.



Turkmenistan advances measure on trade facilitation



Between April 25-27 a technical assistance mission on trade facilitation measures was held in Turkmenistan, gathering international and local experts to discuss the various trade and customs procedures currently being applied and their compliance with the WTO trade facilitation

agreement. This activity follows a series of similar events successfully implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

During a number of meetings with international partners, members of the business community and governmental counterparts, experts reviewed the existing legal framework and the appropriate administrative arrangements to be further implemented in terms of WTO accession. Based on the findings, discussions, and exchange of information with the national experts, a comparative analysis report will be prepared on the trade

facilitation measures applied in Central Asia and their compatibility with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) provisions. The contents of this document will serve as guidelines for advancing trade facilitation measures in Turkmenistan and further advances towards WTO accession. This BOMCA activity aims at introducing measures improving the efficiency of controls and procedures applicable to goods and means of transport crossing the borders and thus facilitating regional and international trade.

Support to cooperation and coordination mechanisms

Donor community discusses border management projects in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan



Between March 3-10 international donor coordination meetings took place in Astana and Bishkek. The representatives of the international and donor organisations - the EU, OSCE, UNDP and UNHCR - participating at the meetings presented ongoing activities and planned projects from their side. In their turn, governmental counterparts

provided the guests with their input on the national priorities in the border management sector and underlined the importance of donor support and involvement.

“We support joint efforts made by the international donor organisations and the Kyrgyz Government, therefore, we recognise that effective coordination leads to more efficient results. Last year, after we held the first extended meeting with representatives from donor organisations we moved into a new, proactive phase of collaboration. Implemented projects and measures undertaken by international do-

nors are efficient and fruitful”, said Col. Nurbek Sultanaliyev, Head of the International Cooperation Department of the Kyrgyz Border Service.

Both events were useful in terms of maximising the development impact of donor-supported programmes through better alignment with country programmes and strengthened donor coordination. The meetings also provided an opportunity for government beneficiaries to clarify their needs and promote new project ideas for donor support.

For more information please visit www.bomca-eu.org or contact Janna Tashieva, BOMCA Communications Officer at janna.tashieva@icmpd.org



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