

Concept Paper

Pilot Virtual Accreditation Initiative for WCO Technical and Operational Advisors (TOA) specialized in the area of free zones

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACCREDITATION OF FREE ZONE EXPERTS:

The rapidly and dynamically changing world requires continuous and efficient change management. Through the journey of reform and modernization in an efficient and effective manner, Free Zone Experts are individuals who possess the capacity to accompany, guide, and mentor organizations. The expected objective of this WCO accreditation process is to establish a pool of WCO Technical and Operational Advisors (TOA) specialized in the area of free zones (FZs), in order to respond to increasing Member demands for capacity building/technical assistance related to FZs.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:

WCO Free Zone Experts are focused on implementation of the key principles for suitable Customs roles that conform to the sustainable development of FZs from both facilitation and compliance aspects, based on Chapter 2, Specific Annex D to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), WCO Free Zone Guidance and other relevant WCO instruments and tools. They have proven expertise in fields ranging from below key principles:

- Territoriality aspect of FZs;
- Customs involvement in FZs;
- Customs involvement in the company approval process and “Authorized Economic Operator” (AEO) concept;
- Reporting to Customs and the use of data and IT systems;
- Customs audit in FZs;
- Customs control and surveillance: authority to seize illegal goods in FZs; on-site checks inside FZs; and use of technology for inspections in FZs;
- Coordinated Border Management;
- Risk Management and data analysis; and,
- Cooperation.

QUALIFICATIONS and COMPETENCIES:

In order to be accredited as WCO Technical and Operational Advisors in the area of free zone, candidates need to meet most of the following requirements:

1. Personal Skills

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Personal suitability and the aptitude required for international development work (open-mindedness, patience, self-awareness, cultural awareness, empathy, etc.).
- A high level of self-motivation, flexibility and commitment to task completion.
- A broad view of, and interest, in international events.
- Appropriate and professional behaviour during the WCO’s capacity building activities;

2. Professional Career Expertise

- Ongoing experience within a Customs administration (at least 5 years).
- Proven experience in implementing Customs modernization processes.
- Expertise of Customs procedures and controls to be applied to FZs.
- Expertise of risk management procedures.
- Expertise of Coordinated Border Management.

- Profound and up-to-date knowledge on free zone regimes and the international environment on free zone issues.
- Understanding of major challenges for free zone.
- Demonstrated understanding of the latest free zone developments including developments in the area of use of IT and data.
- Experience as an advisor, facilitator, trainer or mentor.
- Experience in working in different cultures or in an international environment.
- Customs management experience would be a strong asset

3. Knowledge of WCO Standards and Instruments

- Thorough understanding of the WCO strategies and approach.
- Robust knowledge of the key WCO standards and tools such as, *inter alia*:
 - ✓ Chapter 2, Specific Annex D to the Revised Kyoto Convention;
 - ✓ RKC Guidelines to Chapter 2, Specific Annex D (Free Zones);
 - ✓ WCO Practical Guidance on Free Zone;
 - ✓ WCO Customs Risk Management Compendium;
 - ✓ SAFE Framework of Standards.

4. Vocational Skills

- Proficient English is required. Additional languages such as French are an advantage.
- Ability to communicate effectively and engage with senior Customs managers, as well as other border management and trade representatives and private sector representatives.
- Ability to facilitate group discussions relating to public administration reform and modernization.
- Ability to work effectively in a team by contributing to common objectives.
- Ability to communicate clearly in writing, demonstrating the competence to think and analyse logically and comprehensively.
- Proven analytical abilities and reporting skills.
- Excellent oral, written and IT communication skills.

5. Availability

The precondition for participating in this Workshop is that if the candidate is successful and receives final accreditation, he/she shall be made available to the WCO for a maximum of 12 weeks (not consecutive) over 3 years following the date of accreditation.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

The online Accreditation Workshops will be held to assess candidates as WCO Technical and Operational Advisors on Free Zones.

1. Stage One: Document selection

The applicants will be selected based on their application forms, including Curriculum Vitae (CV). The number of participants at the Online Accreditation Workshop will be limited to a maximum of 12. The Secretariat will select candidates by reviewing their application based on the above-mentioned criteria. An on-line interview may be arranged if necessary.

2. Stage Two: Online Pre-Accreditation Workshop

The candidates will participate in a 5-day online Workshop and demonstrate their skills and knowledge. The Workshop will require a high degree of participation in discussions, group activities and presentations. Annex II shows the expected programme for the 5-day online Workshop.

The Secretariat will assess if candidates have the necessary qualities, based on the criteria. To ensure the transparency of selection, all candidates will be informed of the result of the assessment by the Secretariat. Qualified candidates may go on to Stage Three.

3. Stage Three: Field activities

Qualified candidates who successfully complete the Workshop will be invited to join actual WCO capacity building activities. During the activities, the Secretariat or accredited experts will make an assessment whether they may be accredited as WCO Technical and Operational Advisors on Free Zones.

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