ASYCUDA

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ASYCUDA ++
DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION SOFTWARE
(FUNCTIONAL OVERVIEW)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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1.   CONTROL (MANIFEST)

1.1   General

In order to secure that all goods arriving within the customs territory comply with customs regulations, cargo control activities take place on arrival of the means of transport at either a border office or at an inland clearance office. The cargo is immediately placed under Customs control and the transport documents are keyed into the system.

The cargo control module of the ASYCUDA++ system, also called the **MANIFEST** module, supports all types of transport documents: Bills of lading, airway-bills, rail consignment notes, road transport documents and transit documents (TIR Carnet, transit manifest or any legally-specified Customs document accompanying the goods). The transport documents are processed to verify that each consignment is covered by a declaration.

1.2   Import Manifest Management

The system provides for the following functions:

- Data capture/storage, Checking, Registration of the Manifest;
- Amendments to the Manifest (excesses and shortages);
- Discharge of the Manifest by Customs Declarations;
- Manifest Discharge by Automatic Storage (overtime goods);
- Status reporting;
- Printing the Discharged Manifest.

1.2.1   Data capture/storage, Checking, Registration, Printing of the Manifest

Different types of input are authorised:

- by Customs officers on work stations;
- by carriers on work stations installed in their premises;
- through the integration of data from magnetic media where declarants are not connected.

The computer system captures details of the manifest header and the transport documents, forces input on mandatory fields and edits all the input fields. It validates the data when codes are keyed. If invalid data are entered, a window of valid codes is opened to assist the operator.

The data to be captured are:

- **the manifest identity;**

- **the means/methods of transport** such as air, sea, land, conveyance identity, arrival date; and

- **the transport document** such as loading location, transport document reference, shipper, consignee, marks and numbers of packages, type of goods, weights.

Manifest data are recorded in two stages. Manifest **storage** requires information pertinent to the input of both the manifest general header and the individual transport documents and may be undertaken before the associated cargo arrives.

The user can indicate whether the transport document is a house or master bill. This information can also be entered later in the manifest data processing if required. The separation of the master bills into house bills is essential in certain circumstances if the individual bills are to be written off by the declarations in the system. While provisionally stored the data can be changed or cancelled without any restrictions.

The **registration** step legally places the goods under Customs control when the goods have arrived and when the data are complete and error-free. From this point it becomes legally binding on the importer, or his agent, to produce a goods declaration for the manifested items. At this stage the manifest data can only be modified by Customs and with the importer's written request.

The system automatically allocates a registration number and the manifest is ready to be printed. Alternatively, the system may be configured for Customs to allocate the manifest registration number.

1.2.2 Amendments to the Manifest

This function allows Customs to authorize and execute any modifications on a registered manifest in accordance with administrative procedures and controls, e.g. on the basis of requests either from consignees, who can confirm errors, or from records of excess quantities or shortages found during unloading or receipt into official charge.

All modifications occurring after registration are automatically recorded by the system (audit trail).

1.2.3 Discharge of the Manifest by Customs Declarations

Each transport document constitutes a consignment which may be covered by one or more declarations (partial or complete customs clearance).

Each goods declaration, which indicates the customs regime (e.g. clearance for Home Consumption, suspense, transit etc.) applicable to the goods, automatically discharges the line on the manifest to which it refers.

The discharge may cover different units:

•   either the number of packages, or
•   gross weight when bulk merchandise is involved.

The manifest line is fully "reserved", when a goods declaration is received and registered. The final discharge takes place as the consignment is released.

1.2.4 Manifest Discharge by Automatic Storage (overtime goods)

The Customs Management can specify, under laws relating to any regime, the period of delay to be set in the computer for submission of a goods declaration. (A period during which goods may not be removed even after the input of entry details may also be set, if required).

Goods registered on a manifest are regarded as being under Customs control until a complete entry has been accepted and clearance authorized. Goods which have not been declared within the period allowed may be put into special storage with a view to confiscation and disposal by the authorities. A warning will be printed to be sent to the consignee of the goods.

After the clearance of the goods, the declarant has a limited period to remove the goods, as defined in the national configuration. At the end of this period the goods are entered into a Customs approved warehouse. As with entry into Transit Shed, a second period begins, at the end of which a printout of goods for auction is produced.

1.2.5   Status Reporting

This function has on-line query and update features. A full set of reports is available. In particular, the system can print the list of all outstanding consignments daily in order to enable the relevant service to take the necessary measures. Customs has, at every moment, a full view of the cargo situation and the status of each consignment.

1.2.6   Printing the Discharged Manifest

Manifest discharge is carried out automatically, with all the discharge events, document types and document numbers, when a full entry declaration is lodged against a transport document or when a returned transit document is registered.

2   DECLARATION PROCESSING

2.1   General

The total system architecture combines program logic with a user interface which simplifies and streamlines both the wide variety and complexity of Customs functions.

The system's declaration module supports all Customs regimes (import, export, suspense etc.). These regimes may be subdivided at will using Customs Procedure Codes (CPC's) to assist with the identification of goods liable to special procedures and/or duty exemptions, both full and partial.

The format of the Single Administrative Document (SAD) provides the basis of the input/output Customs Declaration document and the input screens.

The system manages the SAD declaration by using a common processing base for every type of declaration and its applicable Customs procedure.

2.2   Declaration Processing Steps

After initial face vetting on presentation, the basic functions or tasks in the computerised processing of SAD declarations are:

- •   Data capture;
- •   Data validation;
- •   Monitoring Customs regulations;
- •   Storage, registration, selectivity;

- Calculations;
- Assessment;
- Examining officers;
- Inspection findings;
- Removal of goods;
- On-line help;
- DTI Transactions.

2.2.1   Data capture

The different types of input authorised are:

- by Customs officers on work stations;
- by declarants on work stations DTI/EDI (including EDIFACT);
- on public work stations located in the Customs house;
- through the integration of data from magnetic media where declarants are not connected.

At the work stations in ASYCUDA's client-server architecture, validation is carried out both during and at the end of data input of the declaration.

The system dynamically displays the list of all possible declaration types and the user selects the one which accords with that declared. However, the CPC may be varied at item level to permit special end-use exemptions and normal home consumption declarations to be processed within a single goods declaration. This is an important facility for the declarant. Subsequent processing is determined by the CPC's and duties calculated according to this choice.

A screen image of the SAD is displayed.

The keying-in path (the cursor moving through the fields) is defined by the selection of a declaration model in the national configuration. Mandatory, optional and prohibited fields are defined in the configuration module.

At any time during a work session the operator may open a window to obtain on line help or to view the list of valid codes for specific fields. This feature ensures control and provides greater accuracy, productivity, and uniformity .

Freight, insurance and "other costs" which are attributable to the calculation of the Customs value are captured into the system from information entered to fields at header level. Where these costs need to be spread against individual items in the goods declaration, the system automatically spreads the values according to weight/ volume or value. These costs may be entered in different currencies for automatic conversion by the system.

The system also compares the values against individual items with the total invoice amount.

2.2.2   Data Validation

Data validation and control is a two part process that ensures the integrity of the data and the validity of the Customs processes. There are two levels of controls, primary edits and authentication. Primary edits are performed during data capture and before the registration and/or the assessment of the declaration. Authentication checks take place when the operator selects either the "Check", "Registration" or "Assessment" options when data capture is complete for the declaration. Storage of incomplete or incorrect declarations is authorized in order not to loose the data captured.

The primary edit controls take place at the "client" work station and include the following:

Completion Controls

The system ensures that all mandatory fields are completed. Each control is a function of the parameters set in the national configuration file and the CPC. The system refuses to let the user continue if a mandatory box is not filled.

Validity Controls

All fields which require coded data are matched against the control files. If the entered code is not valid, it will be rejected. When this occurs, the system assists the operator by displaying the list of codes existing in the control file. Input of declaration data cannot continue unless the user selects a valid code.

Consistency Controls

Consistency controls are performed by cross checking one data element with others.

2.2.3 Monitoring Customs regulations

If the Customs procedure on the declaration is for a suspense procedure, a wide range of specific processes and controls are performed. The system will maintain a warehouse account, writing off goods as they are used for home consumption, or re-exported. The system also manages specific accounts for the temporary admission on goods with automatic writing off of the "entry" declaration once it is declared for home consumption or re-export

Temporary Admission Procedure

- Management of Temporary Admission (TA) is performed through the declaration module via specific CPC's. The specific features are managed as follows:

- Declarations are recorded individually in the Temporary Admission data base managed at declaration level;

- Management of security can be performed through the accounting module if required, although this is usually managed separately through standing deposits, a bond, guaranteed cheques or in special circumstances (Government Departments, Local Authorities or large traders) by a simple undertaking (see KYOTO Convention Annex E);

- Discharge by exit declaration is carried out against the original goods declaration and against the TA data base.

A set of standard queries and reports are available at the declaration level for users. This provides the user with efficient tools for follow up procedure.

Temporary admission is by definition a procedure set up for a limited duration only. It has a start and an end point. The operation requires at least two declarations:

-         initial goods declaration.
-         one or more declarations for exit.

Integrated Tariff, including Value and Quantity Credibility

The system tests the commodity code against the national tariff file. This file holds the necessary duty/tax rates, including preferential rates. Exemptions, full or partial, are determined through the CPC master file.

The system monitors declared values against the value file to determine over or under valuation. Declarations out of the "correct" value range can be selected for physical examination or documentary check. After a period of live operations it will be possible to establish a file of unit values which can be used to update and administer the value file. It is recommended however that this file of unit values be held outside the declaration processing system itself for security purposes and be managed by the valuation Division in the Customs Department.

Manifest File Check

There are two checks against the manifest file:

-         Validate the manifest and transport document numbers reported on the declaration;

-         Check the entered number of packages or gross weight with the quantities outstanding.

Supplementary documents

The system has a function to allow the user to set up controls in the tariff file to signal the need for specific requirements in the Customs or foreign trade regulations (eg phytosanitary or origin certificates). The system provides the user with information on the checks or documents required. The control criteria can be integrated into the selectivity file and the declaration will be routed to an inspection or documentary check path as appropriate.

There are four different status points associated with the validation of each declaration, namely **storage, registration, assessment, and payment.**

The computer monitors the processing path and the status of each declaration.

2.2.4   Storage, registration, selectivity

Storage

ASYCUDA++ allows data which has been keyed in, but has failed validation checks, to be stored pending resolution of the problem with the declarant. It can also be used for pre-entry of data pending advice from the declarant that he wishes the declaration to be formally accepted by Customs when the goods arrive. While in storage the data can be changed or cancelled without any restrictions.

Registration

When the goods have arrived, and when initial vetting and data input has been completed, registration of the declaration takes place. The system re-performs all of the data validation control checks. Full legal status is assigned to the entry at this point.

The following processes are performed by the registration function:
* "reserve" declared quantities on the manifest line;
* "reserve" declared value and quantities on the suspense procedures file;
* record the entry in the declaration file.

Selectivity

The functions of the selectivity module are described in chapter 4.

2.2.5   Calculations

All duties, taxes and fees are calculated according to the parameters entered into the declaration: Customs procedure code, commodity code, country of origin, preferential rate, weights, values, end-use exemptions etc. The parameters of the taxation module are fully integrated in the Customs tariff and the system's master files.

2.2.6   Assessment

The assessment status of a declaration indicates that duties and taxes are due. During the assessment process, controls are performed on the mode of payment and the assessment is assigned only if all mandatory conditions are satisfied. If pre-payment or credit accounts are to be used, controls initiated are:

* check account balance;
* if insufficient: refuse assessment, return to declarant;
* if sufficient: perform assessment, decrease account balance by the amount of duties and taxes assessed.

2.2.7   Examining Officers

The system facilitates the automatic assignment of declarations to different examining officers. This provides protection against collusion between a Customs examining officer and traders.

It is also important, from a system security, management, and operations viewpoint, to be able to obtain information from the system about when and by whom, certain actions were taken. ASYCUDA++ provides a full range of reports on the declarations active in the system, along with a further, more detailed menu containing management reports which facilitate complete control of declarations, right through to payment and archive.

2.2.8   Inspection Findings

The inspector may query the system to ascertain the reason for physical examination.

In terms of the ability within the system to re-orient the examination, to issue the release note or to alter the declaration, the following is the case in ASYCUDA's recommended configuration:

- Re-orientation of the inspection can be effected but requires the use of a higher level supervisor password;

- The issue of the release note can only be undertaken after assessment and payment, and is undertaken by the clearance function in ASYCUDA (see below);

- Amendments to a legal goods declaration can only be made after formal request from the declarant and the payment of any penalty prescribed in the Customs law. The amendment can be made in the declaration record but, again, only by a supervisor with the appropriate password.

The results of the inspection are recorded in the system.

2.2.9   Removal of Goods

Release of goods is authorized by the clearance function after verification that all controls specified in the system have taken place and that payment has been received or secured. The system has internal controls that will not allow premature release. The system prints a release note, which is used by the declarant to remove goods from the transit shed or Customs area. It also writes off ultimately the line in the manifest file.

2.2.10   On-line Help

This will be performed using function keys and will open windows containing help text describing the current function or data element philosophy without leaving the current application or transaction. In particular:

•   Codes valid in the control files for each specific data element are available using the list function and a search routine is included;

•   In the tariff file, besides the usual on-line queries, a key-word search is provided for the user to find the appropriate commodity code and Customs regulation.

•   Text on specific regulations is available on-line.

2.2.11   DTI Transactions

As part of its architecture the ASYCUDA^{++} software is made available to the Customs so that the trading community can, as part of a local area network or by a direct or telephone link, input import and export declarations without Customs having to first key the data. As in all Customs organisations the use of DTI facility will be subject to approval by Customs before individual declarants can have access to the system.

Security

Features of ASYCUDA++ enable the DTI software to be configured for use in different operational environments, either at the traders or brokers premises or as part of a separate office, within the Customs House. Access to the system is controlled through the necessary security features both in the application software and the UNIX operating system. Declarants will only be able to have access to those ASYCUDA functions permitted by Customs.

Access to on-line information:

Declarants using the DTI software facilities will be able to obtain information from the local system concerning data from non sensitive files, for example, tariff item/statistical code combinations, exchange rates, duty rates country and currency codes.

Data input

Declarants are able to input a declaration and request either storage, registration or assessment of the declaration. The storage module enables declarants to build up a declaration and effectively pre-lodge a declaration prior to the goods arriving. A stored declaration can serve as a template for future consignments.

All declarations, regardless of the status requested by the declarant, are subject to validation of the data input and will include, where appropriate, the tax and duty calculations.

Automatic production of an Assessment notice

Declarations will, after validation and preliminary acceptance, be automatically subject to Selectivity procedures before subsequent processing relating to the payment and release of goods. Those declarations not selected by the system for documentary check or physical examination, will have their duties and taxes assessed and an assessment note will be printed on the DTI Users terminal.

Automatic production of a Receipt and Release note:

Where the assessment function identifies that the method of payment entered is either prepayment or credit and the necessary balance of funds are available then the taxes and duties will be deducted from the declarant or importers account. Following this processing the manifest is written off and a receipt and release note are made available on the declarants printer.

3   TAXES AND CUSTOMS DUTIES COLLECTED (ACCOUNTING)

3.1   Payment options (Declarations)

The system allows for payment of duties and taxes due in a number of ways.

Payment can be made in **"cash"** which in these terms also covers payment by cheque or any other form acceptable to the Customs Department. The system permits cash payments to be made either directly to Customs or at another institution (i.e. bank or post office).

A **Pre-payment** scheme is also available for use by declarant This scheme is particularly useful for both Customs, who have the benefit of cash in advance and a substantial reduction in the number of transactions handled by the cashier, and the trader who has the advantage of taking delivery of the goods immediately after the removal note is issued. While traders can be initially reluctant to adopt this scheme given that it places cash with Customs, the disadvantage is only short-term and the subsequent benefits far outweigh interest lost. Traders can also pay on the basis of any period they wish since the account can be topped up at will, thus reducing the cash-flow "problem" to a minimum. The pre-payment scheme is operating in several ASYCUDA countries to the satisfaction of both traders and Customs.

A **Credit** scheme is also available which permits the clearance of goods from official charge and for which duty and tax will be collected at the end of a specified period.

These schemes are described in detail below:

3.1.1   Cash Payment

For a direct payment at Customs, the procedure set out below applies. (Where payment is made to a separate financial institution (bank, post office, etc.) the system can be varied accordingly).

After assessment of the declaration:

- The system prints an assessment notice;

- Declarant receives the assessment notice and takes it to a Customs cashier for payment;

- Customs cashier receives the money and delivers a receipt;

- Payment is registered in the accounting file and the paid status is automatically recorded in the declaration file;

- Declaration is passed to the clearance officer who reviews the declaration processing path, ensures that all intermediate steps have been carried out and issues the removal note;

- With the removal note the trader can take delivery of the goods.

For a payment made through a financial institution, the following procedure is applied:

- After assessment of the declaration:

- The system prints an assessment notice;

- Declarant takes it to the bank or post office;

- Declarant presents the assessment notice, pays and receives a bank/post office receipt;

- Bank/post office informs the Customs accounting service ;

- Customs accounting service registers the payment and issues a receipt to the user;

- Other steps are the same as cash payment to Customs.

3.1.2   Pre-payment

The following procedures apply:

Prior to Declaration

- Declarant presents a request to open a prepayment account to Customs;

- Customs accounting service opens the account in the system;

- Declarant funds his account by depositing money with Customs directly or a bank/post office receipt;

- Customs cashier registers the cash and the account balance is automatically updated in the system ready for declaration processing. The cash deposit is held in a special suspense account at this stage.

Declaration Processing

- Prepayment account code is keyed in as part of the declaration input (checks are performed to ensure consistency between account holder and declarant or importer);

- At request for assessment the system checks the account balance;

- If the balance is insufficient, the assessment is refused and the declaration is stored until the account balance is increased or the mode of payment is changed;

- If the balance is sufficient, the payment is accepted and the account balance is decreased by the assessed amount. The duty/tax due is registered in the accounts file as a payment for that day under the appropriate headings. All records are updated automatically within the system from the assessment input;

- The declaration is passed to the clearance function which performs the normal checks and issues the removal note.

Ongoing action

- A statement of the payments and declarations attributed to the account may be printed as required;

- The account may be topped up at any time.

3.1.3   Credit

Prior to Declaration

•   An account is set up with Customs in the system to release goods over a specified period at the end of which payment in full for the period becomes due. This payment may be made directly to Customs or through a bank. Security may be required in the form of a guarantee, from a bank or similar institution, which is monitored during declaration processing;

•   The account number attributed by Customs triggers the account during declaration processing.

Declaration Processing

•   Credit account code is keyed in as part of the declaration input and validated;

•   On assessment request, the system checks the account balance;

•   If the credit account balance is insufficient, the assessment is refused. The declarant is informed and the declaration is stored until the account balance has been increased or the mode of payment is changed;

•   If the balance is sufficient, the assessment is accepted and the account balance is decreased by the assessed amount;

•   The declaration is routed to clearance which undertakes the usual checks and delivers the removal note.

Payment action

•   On the appropriate dates the system issues a statement to each account holder which includes all the declarations processed and cleared in the period, with the total amount due;

•   When payment is registered, the credit line balance is adjusted correspondingly, and the declaration records are written off.

3.2   Other payments and receipts

Customs offices may also handle payments from and to traders, or agency transactions for other Government Departments, which may not be directly related to goods declarations. The system caters fully for these situations.

3.3   Accounting information, documentation and reports

Receipt or payment advice notes are printed for every cash transaction. For credit payers, global and periodic accounts are printed together with the related receipt advice. A data file may be extracted to effect direct debits to traders' bank accounts if required.

Daily and monthly accounts and reports for receipts and payments are generated. They include consolidated results, accounting results distributed by mode of payment, duty/tax type, by budget reference and so on. In addition, at all times, Customs staff have at their disposal information relating to duty/tax paid and duty/tax due on unpaid declarations. Credit and pre-payment accounts can be monitored with an on-line query function and may be printed to indicate status.

The data is merged at regional and headquarters level and reports can be produced. These reports constitute essential analysis tools for the Department of Customs and the Ministry of Finance.

It should be noted that the system is totally flexible as regards the possibility to add new taxes or fees (for example VAT).

4   SELECTIVITY MODULE

Selecting the examination procedure for the goods is assisted by the selectivity module based on information in the criteria files. The system will allocate a "channel" status of either green (the cargo will be released without examination), yellow (the cargo will be released after further documentary validation), red (the cargo will be released after a physical examination) or blue (post audit control).

The criteria files are built using national and local control file data. According to their nature, data elements are compared individually and/or in combination to the criteria contained in the control files. The results of such risk analysis should be analyzed periodically in order to maintain, change, extend or eliminate certain parameters.

One data element or a combination of data elements may be chosen to build a criteria.

Management of selection criteria will take place at central level, i.e. criteria to be used by all Customs offices in the country, or at local level for criteria used at individual offices.

Almost every data element in the declaration can be selected. Examples of selection parameters:

- importer/declarant;
- customs value;
- commodity code;
- means/mode of transport;
- country of origin/consignment;
- plus random check (e.g. every 20 declarations).

The selectivity module functions as a filter through which all declarations have to pass. If the data elements of the declaration correspond to those of the selectivity criteria, routing to documentary check, physical examination or flagging for post audit control is carried out.

Example: If the criteria is set to identify goods, say television sets Tariff Heading 85.28 with a particular origin e.g. Japan (country code JP), all declarations with country code JP and Tariff Heading No 85.28 will be selected for examination (yellow, red or blue) by the system.
The number of declarations selected can be controlled through assignment of a percentage of "hits" to each channel

Overriding a system selection will be allowed only under special circumstances, and only after instruction by the officer in charge. Such cases are recorded separately.

The following functions occur against the selectivity file established by Customs:

- Selected registered declarations for:

  - physical examination of goods;
  - documentary check;
  - direct assessment;
  - post audit control

- Select examining officer;

- Display, upon request, reasons for selection and instructions;

- "Stop" declarations selected for documentary check or examination and advise declarant;

- Amend declaration if details are incorrect under standing office procedures and instructions;

- Record findings of the examination;

- Update freight intelligence modules.

5   TARIFF AND TABLES

5.1   General

ASYCUDA has a modern, de-centralised philosophy which requires that copies of the tariff and tables are available in both regional and local offices for declaration processing. Users will be given look-up facilities only.

The files at local and regional offices will be serviced and updated by electronic transmission from Customs Headquarters or, if not available, on magnetic media. This will be co-ordinated across the Headquarters Divisions by the computer project team.

Copies of control tables and the tariff files are also kept on client workstations, and each and every time the user logs on to the system the Customs server verifies the system files in full and carries out an automatic update if required.

As part of the User documentation available, it will be essential to produce a loose-leaf integrated tariff which will also include control table information as well as a guide to the requirements for completion of the SAD. On-line query and print functions are of course available in all files, to users with the appropriate security clearance.

Based on the tariff and tables, all calculations are fully automated.

5.2   Integrated Tariff

The base tariff

General data of the Customs tariff includes commodity codes, description of goods and explanatory notes. The WCO's Harmonised Commodity and Coding System is used as the base. Complete chapter and section notes are included.

The National tariff

The National Customs Tariff contains the country-specific codes, tariffs and control data needed to satisfy national requirements. The implementation thereof consists of the following:

Base data

•   expansion of HS commodity code to national requirements;

•   set up the supplementary unit codes at commodity code level;

•   set up codes for supporting documents;

•   set up specific control references at commodity code level, for example on value;

•   input short description of the goods against the commodity code to be printed on the declaration and to respond to screen prompt. Note: These short descriptions are essential and are currently used in all ASYCUDA systems.

Taxation

The taxation records are set up using the following parameters:

•   Customs procedure (identifying special conditions);
•   commodity code;
•   Preferential trade agreements;
•   Duty/Tax type and base;
•   Duty/Tax rates.

Tariff History

A full historised system is available i.e. all tariff measures are stored with their validity dates, to process declarations, perform re-calculations against the rates in force at the date of registration and for reference purposes. This also permits the introduction of new measures/legislation/tariff rates prior to the date at which they will come into force.

Tariff rate updates

Special features are available to update standard rates and commodity codes in groups. In addition, this feature is controlled by system date so that the new tariff is brought into use automatically on the day specified.

5.3   Tables

Management of Control Tables/Files

To accurately capture and validate declaration data and to insure the proper application of control procedures, more than fifty control files are available in ASYCUDA separated into two basic categories:

- international standard control files, for example
- country codes;
- currency codes;
- package types;
- transport codes ; and

- national control files (UNTDED standards), for example
- importers;
- declarants;
- inspectors;
- tax type, tax base etc.

At the National level, the initial construction and ongoing management of control files is identical to that of the tariff file.

TRADE STATISTICS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

6.1   Data Compilation

The base of the information production systems is the file of Customs declarations assessed and cleared at each Customs office. These files are usually constructed monthly but the period may be determined by Customs according to the Department's requirements.

Regional offices should compile data from the local offices under their responsibility. Regional offices will supply their data for incorporation into a National Declaration file which contains all the declarations records coming from the regional and local Customs offices.

Customs will specify the data stored at regional and national level. It may include all the Customs declarations data but it will usually be more efficient to compile only the data required to enable Customs to fulfill the requirements of its own management information and enforcement teams, and external users at regional or national level.

Clearly some of the information required locally for declaration processing may not be of interest either regionally or nationally on a regular basis and the transfer of all data will clog the database unnecessarily. The regional and national teams will of course have on-line access to the local declaration files to enable specific enquiries to be answered.

In summary, data can be selected, filtered, extracted and compiled in any way and at any level according to the needs of the users.

The data may be aggregated using inter-office telecommunication facilities, or if not available, on magnetic media.

6.2   Data Extraction

The ASYCUDA database design enables data to be selected and extracted from the Customs systems at will. The same process is available for data compiled at the regional offices and at Headquarters.

Report lay-outs can be standardised for regular outputs or user-defined. All data can be interrogated on multiple criteria the results can be displayed on the screen or printed out in the form of reports, charts, graphs, or user-defined forms, using commercial software and programs developed nationally.

Data can be extracted on to ASCII files and transferred using the media available to any other computer system and any software package.

These data extractions are managed through a module which provides the user with a tool for constructing SQL queries on the ASYCUDA++ declarations transaction databases.

6.3   Data Security

The data in the declaration processing and control systems can, to say the least, be regarded as sensitive. Access to the databases of information is protected by different levels of system security. Extraction of data from the databases will be carried out and distributed to users in accordance with any Data Privacy Protection Legislation existing in the country.

6.4   Data Manipulation

Data can be transferred to commercial systems, spreadsheet and statistical software packages at will. To date, ASYCUDA Users are using Lotus 123, dBase and SAS, as well as EUROTRACE, to produce the reports and outputs required.

Management of the declaration data for Customs own purposes follows the same logic as for trade and fiscal data in terms of its selection, filters, extraction, security and compilation for subsequent processing.