

Background Note

Workshop on “Electronic Certificate of Origin and harmonization of documents for the issuance of Certificate of Origin under APTA”

16-17 November 2016
KCCI, Seoul, Republic of Korea

The APTA being a preferential trade agreement, tariff concessions on export products are only available when they comply with the provisions of Rules of Origin (RoO) and a Certificate of Origin (CoO) is issued by the agency of exporting country. The detailed procedures relating to issuance of CoO is given under Operational Certification Procedures, which is part of APTA RoO. The procedures allow issuance of CoO either manually or electronically. So far the APTA CoO is issued manually among its Participating States.

The APTA Secretariat is organizing an awareness-raising cum capacity-building workshop on the above issue, as it has informed the Participating States in the 49th session of the APTA Standing Committee. The Workshop will be held on 16-17 November 2016 in Seoul in close collaboration with the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Korea Customs Service (KCS), back to back with the APTA Standing Committee’s inter-session meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Rules of Origin (RoO). The objectives of this workshop are to create awareness, and discuss the benefits of transforming to issuing electronic Certificate of Origin (e-CoO) and harmonization of documents.

In order to realize the real potential of intra-regional trade and investment among APTA Participating States, it is essential that the best practices on issuance of e-CoO are adopted through a process of regional cooperation among the CoO issuing agencies. The survey on Operational Certification Procedures (OCP) conducted by the Secretariat demonstrates that procedure and documents for making application for APTA CoO are not harmonized. Thus, it is desirable to have a harmonized application form as well as documentation for the issuance of CoO within agreed Rules of Origin under the APTA. The harmonisation of documents for issue of CoO and issue of e-CoO will reduce the transaction cost and unnecessary paperwork as it would enhance transparency and efficiency. This will also reduce the cases of pre- and post-verifications by Customs by the importing countries and thereby the costs associated with it.

In this regard, the APTA Secretariat has been organizing capacity-building programmes for its Participating States as well as related agencies for their transition from paper to electronic means and harmonization of the documents for the issuance of CoO.

With the above background, this Workshop is being organized to discuss and deliberate on the following issues:

- i. To understand the present practices followed in issuing the CoO and each Participating States' preparedness in issuing the e-CoO and the intra-APTA technical assistance that is required;
- ii. To delineate the potential benefits of harmonizing the documents and procedures for the issuance of Certificate of Origin among APTA Participating States; and
- iii. To propose and design the future capacity-building programme for the development of e-CoO for the less advanced Participating States of APTA.

The Workshop will be held for two days (as per the attached tentative) devoted on exchange of information and country experience of procedures in issuing the CoO and the conversion to the issuance of e-CoO under APTA as well as open discussion for harmonization of documents for the issuance of CoO. Live demonstrations of issuance of e-CoO at the KCCI will be arranged to illustrate the actual issuance of e-CoO in the case of the Republic of Korea.

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