



MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION (MCC) CUSTOMS PROGRAM

Review of Jordan Customs Training Program

JORDAN CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

Submitted to:

USAID/Jordan

Submitted by:

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SCOPE OF WORK

This initiative, undertaken as part of the U.S. Agency for International Development supported and Millennium Challenge Corporation funded Customs Administration Modernization Program (CAMP), was designed to review current training programs and initiatives under way in the Jordan National Customs Administration to ensure that:

- Investments in training activities are responsive to the needs of the organization,
- Training is provided to officers when and where they need it,
- Training is provided in an efficient and cost effective manner,
- Training opportunities are made available equally to all officers,
- Training opportunities are fully integrated into the organization so that they are cohesive part of employee development activities and programs,
- Training activities are fully integrated into the regular operations of the Jordan National Customs Administration.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the above, the consultant took the following actions:

- Identified current training programs and initiatives;
- Met with port level managers at the Amman and Aqaba Customhouses and the land border port of Jabber as well as at the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) Customs;
- Met with student trainees, trainers and managers at the Amman Customs Training Center;
- Held initial meetings with the Directors, International Cooperation and Public Relations and Human Resources at the Headquarters of the Jordan Customs Administration;
- Discussed the possibility of utilizing alternative training methods with the staff at the Training Center as well as with some of the port level managers;
- In discussions with the various managers and Customs officers, solicited ideas for recommended training program improvements;
- Participated in two Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercises (organized by the CAMP communications consultant), to gain the external perspective on existing training and identify any additional perceived training needs;
- Conducted extensive follow-up interviews with the senior leadership at the Customs headquarters to verify findings and applicability of recommendations;
- Worked closely with CAMP Communications Consultant to ensure general observations and findings were more scientifically measured during the upcoming National Public Opinion Survey and the associated structured interviews and focus groups.

A complete list of persons interviewed is appended to this report in Annex 1.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

All personnel - from the most senior managers mentioned above (see Methodology) to Customs officers encountered performing their duties at the Customhouses to those actually engaged in the business of training - seemed to clearly recognize the importance of training in a high-performance organization.

Jordan Customs leaders are justifiably proud of their role within the World Customs Organization and their leadership position within the region. The Training Director indicated that they provide training for other countries in the region at the Customs Training Center.

Most training is accomplished using traditional training methods, with students gathered in one location, receiving instruction on specific matters from a knowledgeable instructor. National Customs takes full advantage of opportunities to conduct training activities at the Training Center and at the various work sites as well as to use resources available within the community. Most impressively, a course in strategic planning was recently presented by Italian Customs officers for Jordanian Customs employees charged with responsibility for developing their strategic plans. This is part of the twinning initiative with the Italian Customs Administration.

At this point in time, there are no distance learning programs or other computer based training courses. The Customs Encyclopedia, available online to Customs officers, offers great potential as an information sharing vehicle. Officers should be strongly encouraged or even required to check the encyclopedia on a regular basis. At some locations where officers do not have ready access to computers, computer rooms should be established so that all officers have access to this important source of information.

The Training Center offers an exceptionally wide range of Customs oriented classes, ranging from Customs procedures, to valuation, to law and protection of intellectual property rights. A complete list of classes offered by the Training Center is included as Annex 2 to this report.

There is an annual training plan which includes planned training activities for each year. In some cases students are name requested by the Training Center to participate in various training courses and in other cases port managers are allowed to identify employees in need of specific training opportunities which become available.

There is no consistent method in place to measure the effectiveness of training after an employee returns to his/her work site following training.

Opportunities for language instruction at the Training Center are limited because of antiquated language training equipment. Currently, most language training is accomplished in venues outside the Training Center or at other Customs owned facilities. Accordingly, language instruction for Customs officers is not as readily available as it might be if the Training Center had suitable equipment of its own.

Similarly, some of the computer equipment at the training rooms at the Center is very old and needs to be replaced.

Most employees questioned believed they have the skills necessary to accomplish the duties required of them in their jobs. Almost all indicated they had attended training recently, either at the Training Center or at their own worksites. A number of officers have even had the opportunity to attend training outside of Jordan.

Most officers are unaware of the steps they need to take to be considered for future promotion opportunities. It would be prudent for Customs management to introduce more transparency into the process of selecting the organization's leadership.

Note: Many of these general observations will be verified in the research to be undertaken as part of the development of CAMP communications strategy. This information will be acquired as part of the National Public Opinion survey and the structured interviews.

TRAINING RECORDS MANAGEMENT

A very good system of training records is maintained for each employee. All supervisors, through their desktop computers, can access the training records of each of their employees. For each employee there is a list of training that the employee requires for his or her particular job description and a list of the training classes he or she needs to complete. This enables supervisors to quickly identify gaps in training and ensure that their employees are provided with the training necessary to accomplish their jobs.

At the beginning of each year, the Training Center distributes a list of training classes that are scheduled. This list is updated throughout the year. In fact, just recently, the Training Center disseminated an announcement that additional classes on Customs procedures would be given at the Headquarters during the month of May. When a class is scheduled to be offered, the Training Center notifies the Customhouse and port level managers so that appropriate students can be identified to participate in the training.

At the present time there is no way to measure the results, or effectiveness, of the various training programs that are provided.

A *Best Practice* in training management:

At the Aqaba port, the Jordan Customs manager has a practice of requiring all individuals who have been sent to training to prepare reports for him regarding the experience they had and any new information he has gained. If the port manager determines that the results of the training are beneficial and should be shared with others at the port, the individual who attended the training is asked to prepare a presentation for his or her colleagues, highlighting the important new information learned.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The organizational placement of the Training Center, separate from the Office of Human Resources, needs to be re-visited. At the present time, employee training is completely separate from the recruitment, hiring, and employee development responsibilities of the Office of Human Resources. It would be significantly more efficient if training were fully integrated with the other personnel practices that influence an employee's career. If training becomes an additional responsibility of the Office of Human Resources it is recommended that the organization of that office be reviewed to ensure that adequate attention is given to fully integrating training with the other related activities of the human resources organization, specifically development of updated job descriptions and associated training requirements, human resources planning, development of competitive selection procedures and internal vacancy announcements as well as such progressive initiatives as employee satisfaction surveys.
2. At the present time the Training Center offers courses in Customs procedures for both brokers and their employees who do business with Customs throughout the country. These Training Center classes need to be supplemented by local classes presented at each Customs port to provide those doing business at each location with specifics necessary to work at that port or customhouse. This could be tied into port specific security requirements and a system of identification which would grant access to various approved areas at each location to identified individuals. Upon request, the Training Center should support the local training.
3. There is a need for improved communication between the Training Center and the managers who are the beneficiaries of the training provided by the Center. It is recommended that at least annually or perhaps somewhat more frequently, a face to face meeting be convened to ensure that the opinions and perceptions of both the field and headquarters managers who send employees to training, and the Training Center personnel who actually provide the training, can be shared. This should lead to an improvement in the responsiveness of training programs to the needs of the organization. It would be wise to have these meetings chaired by a senior leader of the Customs administration, perhaps even the Director General or other high-ranking individual, to reinforce for the subordinate managers the organization's high level commitment to ensuring that training is responsive to the needs of the organization.
4. There is a lack of clarity among Customs employees about how officers are selected for supervisory and managerial leadership positions. Clearly articulated requirements for promotion should be made known to all officers. To the extent possible, transparent and competitive selection procedures should be introduced.
5. During a meeting at the Jabber port of entry, discussions between and among those officers of agencies working at the port indicated they would like to have a broader

understanding of the responsibilities and portfolio of each entity doing business at the port. They indicated they had a general understand of each others responsibilities but indicated that they would like a broader understanding. This was discussed with the training center manager and he responded positively to the suggestion that he reach out to the training managers of the other organizations and try to put together a one day class which could be presented at each port. It would be envisioned that a knowledgeable representative of each of the various agencies would make a 30 to 45 minute presentation on their authorities and responsibilities.

6. There is a demonstrated need for Jordan Customs to address the critical issue of succession planning. There are a number of very critical positions within the organization which require skilled leaders and the future success of the organization will be significantly enhanced if a cadre of well trained future managers is developed. Best practices from other Customs administrations should be considered in formulating the program, but the most important factors in the new system will need to be: open and transparent competition; clearly identified selection criteria; interested development of an application for interested employees that addresses each selection criteria; a robust, senior level review of the applications; a commitment by the officer that if selected for the program he or she agrees to remain employed by the organization for a specific length of time following completion of the management development program; a panel interview of the applicants who pass the rigorous review of applications; and selection based on a clearly identified set of skills and characteristics that will ensure the future success of the candidates for development.
7. Training and other professional development activities should be viewed as opportunities for the senior leadership of the organization to continuously review and reinforce for all officers the importance of officer professionalism, the new Code of Ethics and the high standards to which Customs officers are expected to adhere. To assist managers in implementing the Code of Ethics and the essential professionalism requirements of the organization, serious consideration should be given to providing managers with a table of offenses and guidelines suggesting appropriate remedies. This will ensure that officers understand the need to adhere to established procedures at all times and will be used for purposes of rehabilitating the officer and improving his or her performance.
8. A methodology should be developed for measuring the effectiveness of training provided. Requirements associated with this measurement process should be fully communicated throughout the organization. Measuring the effects of training is difficult and should be built into future course development activities.
9. Action to acquire improved language training equipment and updated computer equipment for the Training Center should be initiated consistent with the availability of funds and other organizational priorities.
10. The recent decision taken by the Department of Higher Education to establish a Customs National Training Academy offers a significant opportunity for Jordan's National Customs Administration. Because of the complexities of establishing an accredited,

diploma granting institution, it is recommended that an experienced academic professional, knowledgeable about all aspects of higher education institutions, be hired to oversee the establishment of the academy. In addition, it is recommended that Customs leadership reach out to the World Customs Organization (WCO) to seek their assistance in the establishment of the Academy. Additionally, other Customs administrations should be contacted to determine if there is any comparable experience in establishing an Academy which could be shared. Governance of the new Academy should be overseen by a Board of Directors or Regents made up of a suitable mix of Customs and academic professionals as well as an at-large member or two representing the interests of the international trade community, brokers, forwarders, importers or exporters, etc.

11. The training to be provided at the Academy should not be seen as a substitute for the internal training currently provided to Customs personnel at the Training Center. It is recommended that all training for external parties be conducted at the new Academy and that necessary internal training continue to be provided by an entity fully under the control of the Office of Human Resources. Customs officers should also have the opportunity to attend training courses of interest that are conducted at the Academy. Carefully attention should be paid to ensuring full coordination between the Customs National Academy and the internal Training Center to maximize opportunities for efficiency and sharing of expertise.
12. The results of the upcoming National Public Opinion Survey should be carefully reviewed to ensure that any opportunities for improvements in training are identified and acted upon.

THE CUSTOMS ACADEMY

The current Training Center Director has elaborate plans for the establishment of the new Jordanian Customs Academy. In his view, the Academy will be designated as an intermediate college which will give a diploma to all students who successfully complete the Academy course of instruction. He envisions that the Academy will provide specialized Customs training for Customs employees as well as brokers and other private sector trade organizations and will function as a Regional Training Academy for the Arab states, the Middle East and North Africa.

He envisions that the new Academy will have a special building containing a theatre in addition to well-equipped training rooms. His plans include a permanent staff of specialized instructors, closed circuit television, a control and monitoring room as well as accommodations for students to be housed at the Academy. He also envisions a transportation staff and vehicles.

When asked how this would be paid for, he indicated that 25% of the funding for the project would come from the Customs budget and the remainder of the funding will come from tuition and fees, sale of books, revenue provided by the brokerage community and grants from donors.

He specifically requested that CAMP provide someone with expertise in setting up an Academy to assist him in this endeavor.

Please see recommendations 10 and 11 above, for suggestions regarding the establishment of the Academy.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

- Mr. Mohammad Fayez Obeidat, Director of International Cooperation and Public Relations
- Mr. Mohammad Awwad, Director of the Office of Human Resources
- Mr. Emad Nosaeir, Head of International Cooperation
- Mr. Khaled Rababa, Director of Training Affairs
- Ms. Wafa Hattar, Deputy Director of Training Affairs
- Dr. Jenedi Sakher, Permanent Instructor, National Training Center
- Mr. Amin Al-Tarawneh, Director of Curriculum, National Training Center
- Mr. Valip Ghaleb, Director of the Amman Customhouse
- Mr. Firas I. Al-Dabbas, Director of Aqaba Customs Directorate
- Mr. Maumen Melhem, Director, land border port of Jabber
- Ms. Nada Bweetar, Head of Temporary Admission
- Ms. America Asfoor, employee in the Office of Strategic Planning
- Mr. Zyad Asian, Head of Golden List Program
- Dr. Taha K. Ahmad, Commissioner for Administration and Finance, Aqaba Special Economic Zone
- Eng. Samer B. Al-Hamareh, Management Information Systems Director, Aqaba Special Economic Zone

In addition to the above named individuals, participants in the two Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats exercises held in Jabber and with Golden List members at the headquarters provided valuable insight for this report. The Chief of Party, David Harrell, Deputy Chief of Party Jamal Olaimat and Communications Consultant William Cleary were also invaluable in providing their suggestions and expertise for this training review.

ANNEX 2: LIST OF COURSES OFFERED AT NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

The Training Center staff provided a list of over 150 individual courses that are available at the Center. An overview of course titles, taken from the annual training plan, is provided below:

Training courses for external parties

- Public Security Department Refresher Training;
- Customs Procedures for Brokers;
- Customs Procedures for Al Sulaimaniah Airport Officers;
- Customs Procedures for ASEZA;
- Goods Transport Systems and Activities for Transport Companies.

Training courses for Customs Officers

- Computer Training;
- Various English Language programs;
- Hebrew Language;
- French Language;
- Special Forces Training;
- VIP Security and Protection;
- Customs Procedures (OJT);
- Customs Procedures;
- Various other courses, as needed and available.

ANNEX 3: SUMMARY OF VISIT TO AQABA SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE— CUSTOMS AUTHORITY (ASEZ-CUSTOMS)

Members of the Customs Administration Modernization Program (CAMP) met briefly with ASEZ-Customs on Monday, April 23. The attendees at the meeting included Dr. Taha K. Ahmad, Commissioner for Administration and Finance and Eng. Samer B. Al-Hamarneh from the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. Dr. Ahmad began the meeting with an explanation of the functions of the Zone and the role of Customs within the Zone. It was indicated that Customs activity at the zone is limited to basic inventory control functions and that they only use two types of Customs declarations.

Some training for ASEZ-Customs personnel is provided at the Jordan Customs National Training Center as needed. At the zone, they have available training rooms and other facilities for officer training.