

Australia helps train overseas customs staff

The Australian Customs Service has historically undertaken an extensive program of international technical assistance. This program reflects the Government's overall aid and international relations priorities, with a primary focus on the Asia/Pacific region.

Requests for assistance are received from a number of different sources including:

- individual customs administrations;
- multilateral bodies such as the South Pacific Forum and Oceania Customs Organisation;
- other Australian government agencies such as AusAID;
- educational institutions; and
- private-sector consultants.

In the year to 30 June 2000, countries provided with technical assistance by Customs included Brunei, Chile, Fiji, Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Northern Marianas, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam. During the year Customs officers from Fiji, Samoa, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea have been attached to Australian Customs for short terms to develop skills and knowledge to improve their own customs organisations.

As a co-ordinator of the APEC Technical Assistance Program, Customs also conducted two workshops - one on "Risk Management" and another concerning "integrity" which were attended by representatives from 14

APEC countries. In addition, 14 officers from other customs administrations participated in Customs International Executive Management Program.

Objectives

The objectives of Customs technical assistance program are:

- assist designated/developing countries to improve their customs processes and procedures;
- ensure reforms that are supported are consistent with the principles of harmonisation and simplification espoused by the WCO;
- ensure effective outcomes for Australian Government expenditure on customs technical assistance programs; and
- build co-operative relationships with other customs administrations through the provision of technical assistance.

All requests for technical assistance are co-ordinated through Customs International Section. Other Australian and international bodies such as AusAID and the UN Development Program fund the bulk of technical assistance provided by Customs.

The International Section also manages Customs International Executive Management Program.

Through this program, Customs seeks to build co-operative relationships with other customs administrations; to develop management capacity within these administrations; and to contribute

to improved international customs procedures and improved integrity in international customs practice.

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