

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2016



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inSIGHT

This issue, our cover features the artist's impression of the new Customs Operations Command (COC), which will be ready in 2019. The building is located at Jalan Bahar, and will house Singapore Customs' intelligence and investigation teams, and also features an on-site warehouse for better management of case exhibits. The ground-breaking ceremony took place in October. More details on page 01.

Industry engagement and collaboration is underway for the National Trade Platform. The project team has met with over 250 people so far, and are open to hearing more ideas. Join us and be a part of the collaboration! Find out how on page 04.

Singapore Customs took part in a Proliferation Security Initiative exercise – Exercise Deep Sabre 2016 – and showcased whole-of-government efforts in port search demonstration. See how we worked with Singapore Armed Forces' Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosives Defence Group and the Singapore Civil Defence Force on page 06.

In Updates, we share Singapore Customs' involvement in Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group meetings (page 09), what our officers learnt from a visit to the Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management (page 10), and how we celebrated Bishan Home's – our partner home – 18th anniversary (page 12).

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue.

Neo Wen Tong
Editor

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New Customs Operations Command at Jalan Bahar in 2019

The ground-breaking ceremony for the new Customs Operations Command (COC) took place on 25 October 2016.

The ceremony was officiated by Singapore Customs Director-General Ho Chee Pong, and witnessed by Singapore Customs' senior management and officers.

The ceremony was also attended by representatives from JTC Corporation (JTC), and consultants and contractors of the project.

The new COC will be purpose-built to cater to Singapore Customs' current and future operational needs. It will allow for the full spectrum of the department's intelligence and investigation work to be integrated under one roof, and will be completed in 2019.

A warehouse is being incorporated on-site at the new COC, and with the storage facility within the same compound, Singapore Customs will have better management, security and control over the case exhibits.

The building will also be equipped with indoor and outdoor training facilities to allow officers to conduct physical and tactical

training for enforcement work.

Director-General Ho said: "The building of the new COC is a key milestone in our continuing efforts of ensuring Singapore Customs' effectiveness in upholding our mission as the guardian of trade."


He added that the new COC will boost the department's enforcement effectiveness when it is complete. "I have no doubt that the new COC will play a crucial and integral role in ensuring that going forward, Singapore Customs remains operationally and future-ready," he said.

The Jalan Bahar location was selected due to its proximity to the land checkpoints and the future Tuas mega port. It is also situated along the Pan-Island Expressway exit, allowing officers to have good access to other major transport routes to respond to enforcement operations in other parts of Singapore, including the air and sea checkpoints.



CURRENT COC AT KEPPEL ROAD

The current COC is located at Keppel Road and is the headquarters for all Singapore Customs enforcement operations. The building was built since 1940 and was originally designed to provide office space for staff working at the sea port and to also house their families on the upper floors.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the then Customs and Excise Department began to use the building as the base for its enforcement functions, which continues till today. 



From left to right: Members of Singapore Customs' senior management team Assistant Director-General (Corporate Services) Winston Tay, Senior Assistant Director-General (Intelligence & Investigation) Lee Tiow Yong, Director-General Ho Chee Pong, and Assistant Director-General (Intelligence & Investigation) Yeo Sew Meng symbolically broke ground at the ceremony.



Director-General Ho addressed the crowd of Singapore Customs officers, representatives from JTC Corporation, and consultants and contractors of the project.

Sharing knowledge with Africa, Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar, and Vietnam customs administrations

Singapore Customs and Japan Customs jointly ran two courses for these customs administrations in September and October.

Held at the Singapore Customs' Academy, the courses were organised under the ambit of the Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century, which is co-sponsored by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

CUSTOMS MODERNISATION FOR AFRICA COURSE

This course was organised for officials from 11 African countries and was held from 26 to 30 September 2016.

The five-day course covered Singapore Customs' and Japan Customs' best practices on security initiatives and risk management.




This course has been so fruitful for me. My biggest takeaway is how Singapore interfaces the scanning system with its national single window.

Ms Lucy Mudaheranwa, Head of Business Development Division, Rwanda Revenue Authority

AUTHORISED ECONOMIC OPERATOR (AEO) COURSE

An AEO course was held for 13 officials from the customs administrations of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Vietnam from 24 to 26 October 2016.

During the three-day course, participants learnt about the objectives, benefits, and good practices of implementing AEO programmes. 



As we are piloting the AEO programme in Cambodia, this course helped us a lot and provided us with a lot of capacity in the implementation of AEO programmes.

Mr Ros Dara, Deputy Director, General Department of Customs & Excise, Cambodia



Our department is forming an AEO working group, which I will be in. What I learnt in this course will be useful for my work.

Mr Tin Maung Tun, Assistant Director, Ministry of Finance, Myanmar



The course provides us with a chance to share with the other participating countries about what we have done in our country on the implementation of the AEO programme, and learn from Singapore Customs and Japan Customs. I have learnt a lot.

Mr Pham Duy Hung, Manager, Department of Bac Ninh Customs, Vietnam



This course is a valuable opportunity for us. It is very informative, detailed, and it tells us what to do, why and how. As the concept of AEO programmes is quite new to us, this course will help develop our programme further.

Ms Manoly Chounthavong, Head of Human Resource, Development Division, Ministry of Finance, Lao People's Democratic Republic


Singapore, US conduct joint Intellectual Property Rights operation

Singapore Customs and the United States Customs and Border Protection (US CBP) conducted a joint operation targeting intellectual property rights (IPR) infringing goods in August.

During the operation, Singapore Customs targeted and conducted inspections on postal parcels and air express consignments containing mobile phones and watches that were bound for the US.

Over the three-day operation held from 30 August to 1 September, more than 3,600 packages were inspected, of which 74 parcels suspected to contain IPR-infringing goods were marked for the US CBP to conduct further checks on when they arrived in the US.

Three parcels that were exported from a local address were also detained for verification by the rights holders.

The results of the joint operation were shared at the Law Enforcement and Homeland Security and Safety Cooperation Dialogue, held in the US from 21 to 23 September 2016. 



Clockwise from top: Parcels of interest were identified by Singapore Customs officers. Packages were put through an X-ray machine for screening, and suspicious packages were opened for closer inspection.

Collaborating with industry partners to build the National Trade Platform

The National Trade Platform (NTP) project team met with over 250 individuals from more than 130 companies across the trade and logistics community to understand the key challenges faced by these businesses today.

Through a series of industry interviews, ideation workshops – during which participants generate and share creative solutions to challenges – and briefings, the team gathered traders' views on the planned features of the NTP, identified opportunities for new platform services,

and learnt about the concerns of the trade and logistics community.


Over 40 industry interviews were held from June to August this year to understand the challenges that different players in the trade and logistics supply chain face.

With the feedback gathered from these

interviews, the NTP team ran five ideation workshops in August. In each workshop, participants – including industry players, developers, and small and medium-sized enterprises – were grouped into six personas to brainstorm solutions to the challenges raised. The personas represented different players in the trade and logistics supply chain.

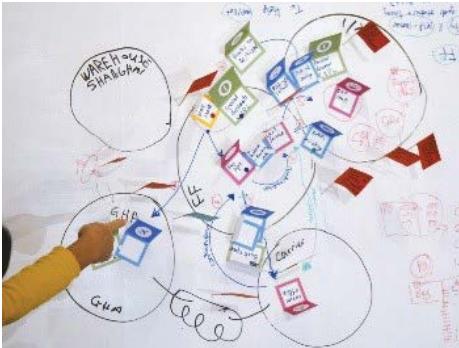
The participants filled hundreds of coloured sticky notes with a multitude of ideas – different colours represented how challenging each solution would be to implement – and the information was collated by the NTP team to work on.

Two briefings were also conducted in September to inform existing TradeXchange users what to expect from the NTP and the transition leading up to the launch next year. Close to 120 representatives from 50 companies attended the sessions at Revenue House. The NTP team also made use of this opportunity to gather feedback from the existing users on their concerns.

Through multiple interactions with the industry, the NTP team gathered important feedback, and have incorporated features into the NTP that will address some of the issues raised, such as reducing duplication of paperwork and having a secure data depository. 



Briefings were conducted to inform existing TradeXchange users about the NTP, and to gather feedback to better design the platform to address their needs.



The NTP team ran ideation workshops with representatives from the trade and logistics sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises, and developers to brainstorm possible solutions to challenges faced currently.

JOIN US – BE A PART OF THE COLLABORATION!

The NTP team is committed to collaborate with the trade and logistics community to gather feedback and insights to co-design a platform that is not just forward-looking and innovative, but practical and relevant to the business community.

To provide feedback or to indicate interest in being involved in building the NTP, contact the project team at Customs_NTP@customs.gov.sg

THE NATIONAL TRADE PLATFORM (NTP)

The NTP is being designed to be a one-stop trade information management platform that will facilitate and enable electronic data sharing among businesses and the Government. It will replace the current TradeNet and TradeXchange.

For more information on the NTP, including news and events, visit the NTP microsite at customs.gov.sg/about-us/national-single-window/national-trade-platform



Showcasing WOG efforts in port search demonstration

The port search is part of a series of activities designed for the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercise, Exercise Deep Sabre, to encourage international cooperation to stop the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials.

PORT SEARCH DEMONSTRATION

As part of Exercise Deep Sabre 2016, Singapore conducted a port search demonstration of its Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) capabilities in the container inspection of WMD-related materials on 29 September 2016.

The port search was a simulated scenario where Singapore received information on a suspected shipment of specialised nuclear material transiting through the country – the container had been declared to contain industrial radiological source instead.

A whole-of-government (WOG) interdiction operation, coordinated by Singapore Customs, was mounted.

Officers from the Singapore Armed Forces' Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosives Defence Group identified and analysed the contents of the container. Singapore Civil Defence Force personnel

were on standby at the site to conduct rescue, evacuation and perform casualty decontamination.

The port search demonstration highlighted the importance of Singapore's WOG approach towards counter-proliferation efforts and facilitated the sharing of CBRN capabilities and inspection best practices among the countries participating in Exercise Deep Sabre 2016.

EXERCISE DEEP SABRE 2016


Senior Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman officiated at the opening ceremony of the PSI exercise, Exercise Deep Sabre 2016. This is Singapore's third time hosting the PSI exercise.

In his opening address, Dr Maliki highlighted the value of having such exercises, given the evolution of counter-proliferation issues and the need for a coordinated approach among different agencies.

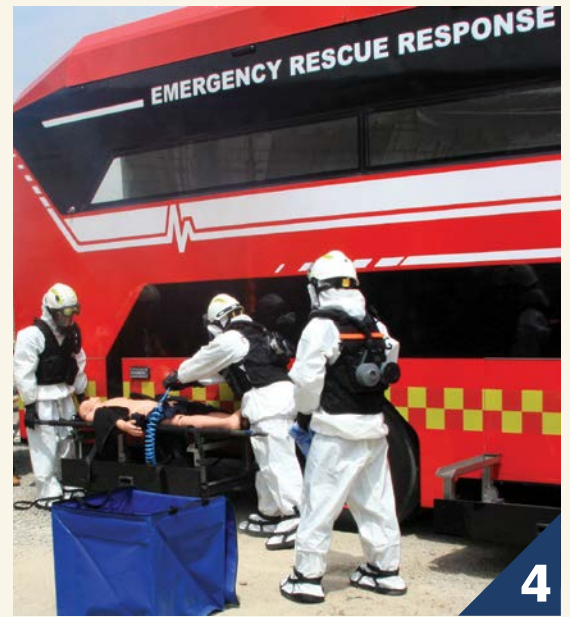
"Given the variety of ways and means that proliferators can exploit, the international community must constantly develop innovative and effective methods to address these challenges," he said. "This whole-of-government approach to counter-proliferation requires coordinated efforts among enforcement, intelligence and military agencies, port and civil aviation authorities, and industry players."

This year's exercise, held from 27 to 30 September 2016, involved more than 800 personnel from 21 countries.

Exercise participants took part in a series of shore and sea activities, including a table-top policy simulation, an academic seminar, a simulated maritime interdiction of a merchant vessel, and a port search demonstration.

The PSI is a multinational initiative launched in 2003. To date, 105 countries around the world have endorsed the PSI. 

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PORT SEARCH DEMONSTRATION



- 1, 2** Singapore Armed Forces' Chemical Biological, Radiological and Explosives (CBRE) Defence Group operators use hand-held detectors to sense for the presence and intensity of radiation from the target container. Their personal dosimeters indicate high levels of radiation and the operators withdraw to safety. The CBRE team then deploys its robotic systems to investigate, pick up the radioactive material and place it into a containment vessel lined with lead.
- 3** Singapore Customs officers (in yellow vests) view images transmitted by the robot, and document the images to transmit to the relevant agencies.
- 4** During emergencies involving chemical, biological or radiological hazards, there may be casualties. In such situations, the Singapore Civil Defence Force conducts personnel decontamination of casualties using the Mass Decontamination Vehicle before conveying them to hospitals via ambulance.

Two Singapore Customs teams receive Minister for Home Affairs Operational Excellence Award

This award is presented to outstanding officers from Home Team departments and other agencies in recognition of their professionalism and proficiency in mounting key operations.

Representatives from the two Singapore Customs teams, Higher Superintendent of Customs Koh Eng Fa and Chief Customs Officer Abdul Hamid Bin Embi, received the awards from Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs Desmond Lee at the Minister's Awards Presentation Ceremony on 28 September 2016.

The awards are for Singapore Customs' participation in a series of multi-agency joint operations and the forward security checks implementation at the checkpoints respectively.

MULTI-AGENCY JOINT OPERATIONS

Singapore Customs' Suppression & Community Engagement Branch officers participated in a series of three multi-agency joint operations with the Singapore Police Force (SPF) and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) from September 2015 to March 2016. These operations were targeted at duty-unpaid cigarettes peddlers suspected to be foreign immigration offenders.

To ensure the success of the operations, observations were conducted weeks earlier. The agencies then met to further discuss and firm up the operations plan.

HSC Koh said he was privileged to have taken part in this series of multi-agency joint operations.

With each agency having specific expertise, it was a good opportunity to gain

experience, exposure, and network with our counterparts from other agencies, he said. "Such joint operations demonstrate whole-of-government efforts and collaboration in tackling crime."

FORWARD SECURITY CHECKS AT LAND CHECKPOINTS


Forward security checks at land checkpoints were implemented by ICA to conduct security checks before immigration clearance. This move was part of the tightening of security measures at the checkpoints.

Shifting the security checks to take place before immigration clearance increases the distance before the exit point of the

checkpoint, creating more time and space for officers to react in case of evasion attempts.

ICA worked closely with other agencies such as the SPF, Central Narcotics Bureau, and Singapore Customs, to make sure that the shift was made seamlessly. Singapore Customs worked with ICA to relocate the Customs Car-Bay Office, in tandem with the forward checks to facilitate the collection of duty and taxes.

The implementation of the forward security checks was successful with the cooperation and coordination among the various agencies.

As a member of the combined team, CCO Hamid represented his Singapore Customs teammates to receive the award. 



Higher Superintendent of Customs Koh Eng Fa (left) and Chief Customs Officer Abdul Hamid Bin Embi (right) received the Minister for Home Affairs Operational Excellence Award from Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs Desmond Lee.

Singapore Customs chairs Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group meetings

Singapore Customs' Senior Assistant Director-General (Policy and Planning) Lee Boon Chong chaired the 21st Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group Meeting.

Held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, from 27 to 29 September 2016, the meeting was attended by representations of customs administrations of the 10 ASEAN Member States. During the three-day meeting, the Working Group discussed ongoing regional projects on customs facilitation and emerging issues of common interests among the ASEAN customs community.

Mr Lee also chaired the 14th Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Sub-Working Group Meeting on the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 October 2016.

During this meeting, representatives from the ASEAN Member States discussed the planning and operational aspects of the ACTS Pilot Project and the plans for its roll-out.



Top: Mr Lee at the 14th Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Sub-Working Group Meeting on the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) held in Jakarta, Indonesia. Bottom: Mr Lee chairing the 21st Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group Meeting held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



Assistant Head of Operations Management Branch (OMB), Mr Chong Wei Hoong (top), and Deputy Head of OMB, Mr Tan Chan Hwee, spoke about combating counterfeiting and intellectual property protection respectively.

Sharing expertise on Intellectual Property Rights protection

Singapore Customs' Assistant Head of Operations Management Branch (OMB), Mr Chong Wei Hoong, gave a presentation on Good Practices on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy in Singapore on 11 November 2016.

His presentation was part of the workshop on ASEAN Trade Capacity Building in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), supported by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States (US) Department of State. It was organised by the US Patent and Trademark Office Global Intellectual Property Academy, in cooperation with the US Department of Homeland Security and the IP Academy (Singapore).

Deputy Head of OMB, Mr Tan Chan Hwee, presented on a similar topic at the Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century: Promotion of Effective Intellectual Property Protection, jointly sponsored by the Singapore Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency on 1 November 2016.

These presentations are part of Singapore Customs' constant efforts in knowledge exchange and sharing our expertise on border enforcement of IPR with our international counterparts.



(Photo: Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management, Republic Polytechnic)

Learning visit to Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management

Over 20 Singapore Customs officers visited the Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management at Republic Polytechnic on 18 October 2016. They learnt about how the centre works with Singapore-based companies to help them develop and deepen supply chain and logistics expertise through innovative processes and technology.

Representatives from the centre shared their experience through case studies, such as how they used supply chain logistics expertise to help the hotel industry increase room availability by making housekeeping more efficient.

Singapore Customs officers also toured the Supply Chain Lab, which showcases adoption of innovation in supply chain management, and Productivity Lab, which features technologies aimed at enabling lean manufacturing.

Company director fined for fraudulent evasion of GST and jailed for furnishing false information to Singapore Customs

A wholesaler of souvenirs and gifts was sentenced on 3 November 2016 to a fine of \$134,214.96 (or in default six months' imprisonment) for fraudulent evasion of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and one week's imprisonment for furnishing false information to Singapore Customs.

Xie Yuan, 30, director of Nu Gift Pte Ltd, pleaded guilty to two charges. Another three charges were taken into consideration in the sentencing.

Investigations by Singapore Customs revealed that Xie created fictitious invoices with lower values for the goods imported by Nu Gift Pte Ltd. Between June 2014 and November 2015, Xie under-declared the import values of goods such as mirrors, magnets, key chains, canvas bags, coasters, and umbrellas he imported on four occasions. The under-declaration resulted in a shortfall of more than \$26,000 in GST payment.

In the course of investigations, Xie also attempted to mislead the investigation officer that the evaded amount was not huge, by self-declaring import values that were slightly higher than what had been falsely declared in the import permits.



Visit tinyurl.com/4Nov16MR for more details.



(Photo: stock image)

National Trade Platform wins Smart City Asia Pacific Award

The National Trade Platform (NTP) has won the Smart City Asia Pacific Award.

The platform, which won in the Economic Development category, builds on the success of Singapore's existing TradeXchange and TradeNet systems to facilitate more seamless data exchanges across the entire supply chain.

Mr Ho Chee Pong, Director-General of Singapore Customs, said: "The NTP goes beyond a technology upgrade of TradeNet and TradeXchange. In building the NTP, we take into consideration current business needs and emerging trends in global trade. The platform leverages advances in technology to help businesses improve productivity in their interactions with government and business partners."

The NTP is a key example of public and private sector co-creation.

"This project is also a journey on which the government collaborates and co-creates with business communities and service providers to build a vibrant and innovative trade ecosystem," said Mr Ho.

"The NTP will help to further solidify Singapore's position as a leading global trade hub."

Article extracted from TechNews, GovTech Singapore's newsletter. For the full story, visit tinyurl.com/GovTechIDC

New STP Companies on board

Three companies joined the Secure Trade Partnership (STP) programme in the third quarter of 2016. The STP is a voluntary certification programme that encourages companies to adopt robust security measures and contribute to improving the security of the global supply chain.

STP-Plus status

Ardentec Singapore Pte Ltd

Established in 2006, Ardentec Singapore provides semiconductor testing solutions. Ardentec Singapore's strategic location in South East Asia provides regional customers better service through a shorter cycle time.

"Being certified STP-Plus further strengthens the confidence of our team and commitment in supply chain security. This certification has also reaffirmed our reliability and commitment in safeguarding the integrity, security, and properties of our customers," said Mr David Hsiao Queen-Ping, General Manager.

STP status

"K" Line Logistics (Singapore) Pte Ltd

"K" Line Logistics aims to create long-term strategic partnerships that will deliver competitive advantage by offering real-time information about the status of goods at any time in the supply chain.

"Since being STP-certified, "K" Line is committed to adopting robust security measures for the entire supply chain. This gives our customers assurance and confidence," said Mr Abdul Rahim, Quality Executive.

CWT Limited

CWT Group offers integrated logistics solutions to some of the world's best known brands in the chemical, fast moving consumer goods, healthcare, electronics, automotive and industrial sectors.

"CWT benefits by obtaining STP certification, as we will be known as a lower risk company and shipments can be cleared faster from ports," said Mr M. Sintha, Dangerous Goods & Compliance Manager.

Bishan Home's 18th anniversary celebration

Singapore Customs volunteers were all hyped up on Saturday, 22 October 2016, to help out at the 18th anniversary celebration of Bishan Home for the Intellectually Disabled, as they looked forward to interacting with the fun-loving residents.

The atmosphere was lively as Bishan Home staff, residents and volunteers sang and danced to the accompaniment of music.

Singapore Customs has partnered Bishan Home since 2001. To commemorate our long-term partnership with the home, Director-General of Customs Ho Chee Pong was presented a token of appreciation by the guest-of-honour, Mayor, Central Singapore District, Denise Phua, and Bishan Home Chairman Lau Wah Ming.



TRAINING CALENDAR

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to www.customsacademy.gov.sg

PROGRAMME	
<p>SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT</p> <p>This three-day course provides trade declarants with an overview of customs procedures pertaining to the import and export of goods, the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, classification of goods, and the rules of origin.</p> <p>The course comprises three modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days) • SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (half-day) • SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (half-day) <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>9-11 January 2017 13-15 February 2017 13-15 March 2017</p>
<p>SC111 HANDS-ON TRADENET DECLARATION</p> <p>This one-day workshop provides new declarants who have just entered the industry with basic information on TradeNet, and its various message and declaration types.</p> <p>The guided practical session uses simulated scenarios to help new declarants prepare and submit a declaration using the Government Frontend Solution.</p>	<p>13 January 2017 23 March 2017</p>
<p>SC200 STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME</p> <p>This one-day seminar provides an overview of Singapore's strategic goods control system and its regulations, registration procedures and permit requirements for strategic goods transactions, as well as the essentials of an internal (export control) compliance programme.</p> <p>The seminar comprises two modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control (half-day) • SC202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme (half-day) <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>16 February 2017</p>
<p>SC400 CUSTOMS COMPETENCY TEST FOR DECLARANTS</p> <p>This module is designed to test an individual's knowledge of the customs procedures and documentation requirements. Upon passing this test, the individual can then apply for registration with Singapore Customs as a declarant to submit TradeNet permit declarations.</p> <p>This is an open-book test comprising 50 multiple-choice questions. The topics tested include: customs procedures, TradeNet declarations, valuation, classification, rules of origin and specialised procedures. The one-hour test can be taken during the AM or PM session.</p> <p>Individuals who wish to sit for the test are advised to familiarise themselves with above-listed subject areas. They can do so through courses or eLearning at Singapore Customs Academy, the Customs Virtual Academy and by visiting the Customs website.</p>	<p>3 January 2017 31 January 2017 2 February 2017 20 February 2017</p> <p>(AM and PM sessions available)</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS</p> <p>This bimonthly programme is designed to equip newly-registered manufacturers with a better understanding of the rules of origin under Singapore's free trade agreements, the application procedures for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements.</p> <p>For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg</p>	
<p>TRADERS CLINICS</p> <p>These one-to-one consultation sessions are an avenue for traders to seek general advice on general customs procedures and services. If you are interested, write in to customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg for an appointment. Sessions are subject to availability.</p>	



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55 Newton Road #10-01 Revenue House Singapore 307987
www.customs.gov.sg