Preferential Country of Origin module launched!

A journey that began 4 months ago was finally concluded on 19th August when the Preferential Country of Origin module was successfully launched. The module would facilitate the applications and issuance of Vanuatu Certificates of Origin, another first of its kind in the ASYCUDA system, worldwide.

Speaking at the event, the Acting Director of Customs and Inland revenue, Mr. Collins Gesa welcomed the introduction of the module and looks forward to the use of it to facilitate the processing of Vanuatu Certificates of Origin.

The Manager of the Vanuatu Aid Management Unit, Ms. Luisa Letlet, and the Director of External Trade, Mr. Joe Pakoa, both encouraged those concerned to make good use of the module to boost Vanuatu exports. On behalf of the Government, all the Speakers thanked the donors, EIF and Australia, the implementing partner, UNCTAD, and the VeSW Project team, for making this module a reality.

The event was fortunate to have Mr. Shannon Ryan, the new Director of the Australian Governance for Growth (GfG) Program, the co-donor of the VeSW Project, who pledged Australia’s support to the VeSW Project.

The PCO module is the 3rd of the 5 modules to be deployed under the VeSW Project. The remaining modules are the Environment ODS module and the Industry Concession module, which will be deployed before the end of the Project in December 2021.
The PCO module is the first VeSW module to be used by Customs. The previous VeSW modules were the SPS module used by Biosecurity and the Energy Efficient Appliance module.

Certificate of Origin module Launching in pictures

Above: Director External Trade, Mr. Joe Pakoa

Right: Acting Director presenting the first-ever electronic Vanuatu Certificates of Origin to the Applicant

The event was attended by both the Government and Private guests. It was also streamed live to a global audience.
Vanuatu Certificates of Origin can now be verified online!

Not only has the online processing of Certificates of Origin gone totally paperless with the introduction of the Preferential Country of Origin (PCO) module, Vanuatu and UNCTAD have taken it a step further by implementing the online verification of Vanuatu e-Certificates of Origin.

Noting that the main purpose of the PCO module is to allow the online facilitation of Origin Certificates, Certificates can still be forged by those who wish to disguise the origins of their products. This fraudulent activity can happen to both manual and automated certificates.

However, thanks to the PCO module, the online verification mechanism will therefore allow Customs Officials at the importing country to verify the Vanuatu Certificates of Origin online, 24/7, without having to contact Vanuatu Customs. Being able to quickly and efficiently verify that products are of Vanuatu origin, could therefore mean that clearance of the goods at the destination countries can be well facilitated by the Customs authorities, possibly under duty free treatments, or just to validate the originality of the products, which is an important role of Customs when it comes to trade formalities.

This online authentication of Certificates of Origin is probably the first of its kind in the Pacific region and in many parts of the world. It followed the previous initiative of verifying Phytosanitary and Veterinary SPS certificates, issued by Biosecurity Vanuatu, online.

It is anticipated that these online authentications would give confidence to the importers of Vanuatu products, due to the preferential treatment by border agencies at the destination countries to facilitate clearance of Vanuatu products, and hopefully, as a result, increasing Vanuatu exports.

The clickable screenshot on the left shows the online verification of an actual Vanuatu Certificate of Origin to China that was processed in the new Preferential Country of Origin module.

To ensure consistency with the use of the Preferential Country of Origin module, training has to be delivered also to Customs and the private sector at Vanuatu’s other international port of Luganville, Santo.

Luganville is Vanuatu’s largest port of export, that is just fitting that the users are well versed with the module to ensure that processing of Certificates of Origin applications are well conducted, and in good time.

Delivered in separate sessions on 5th August, the one day training sessions were attended by both Customs Officials and Customs Brokers in Luganville.

The trainings were delivered by VeSW Manager, and the Customs Officials who were involved with the development of the module.

Picture: Customs Officials during the Santo training.
Vanuatu leading the Pacific in Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

The overall objective of the Vanuatu Electronic Single Window project is to expand Vanuatu’s GDP through increased exports. The project outcome is to increase Vanuatu’s competitiveness through the reduction of cost and time of trading across its borders. The Project is kindly funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the Australian Government. The Vanuatu Government is also providing in-kind contribution towards the project, in terms of personnel and ICT support.

The main implementing partner in the Project is United Nations for Trade and Development, UNCTAD.

The Vanuatu Electronic Single Window Project
Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business
Private Mail Bag 9056
Port Vila, Vanuatu
Phone: (+678) 33093
VOIP: 2363
Email: swpt@vanuatu.gov.vu
Website: https://singlewindow.gov.vu
For past editions of this Newsletter, please click on the Newsletter link on the Single Window website.