

Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	Procedure completed
Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020	
Repealing Decision No 624/2007/EC Repealed by	
Subject	
2.10.01 Customs union, tax and duty-free, Community transit	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection		24/01/2012
		PPE BALDASSARRE Raffaele	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		S&D COFFERATI Sergio Gaetano	
		ALDE SCHMIDT Olle	
		ECR BIELAN Adam	
		ECR STREJČEK Ivo	
		EFD SALVINI Matteo	
		Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion
BUDG Budgets			29/02/2012
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Committee for opinion on the legal basis	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs			
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	3278	05/12/2013
	Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	3208	10/12/2012
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Taxation and Customs Union	ŠEMETA Algirdas	

Key events			
09/11/2011	Initial legislative proposal published	COM(2011)0706	Summary

14/12/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
29/08/2012	Legislative proposal published	COM(2012)0464	Summary
10/12/2012	Debate in Council	3208	
23/01/2013	Vote in committee, 1st reading		
30/01/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A7-0026/2013	Summary
21/11/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/11/2013	Debate in Parliament		
21/11/2013	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T7-0509/2013	
05/12/2013	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
11/12/2013	Final act signed		
11/12/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		
20/12/2013	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/0341A(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
	Repealing Decision No 624/2007/EC 2006/0075(COD) Repealed by 2018/0232(COD)
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 033; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 114-p1
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	IMCO/7/09770

Documentation gateway

Initial legislative proposal		COM(2011)0706	09/11/2011	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2011)1317	09/11/2011	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2011)1318	09/11/2011	EC	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE487.906	09/07/2012	EP	
Legislative proposal		COM(2012)0464	29/08/2012	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE496.681	15/10/2012	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE500.428	12/11/2012	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A7-0026/2013	30/01/2013	EP	Summary

Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T7-0509/2013	21/11/2013	EP	
Draft final act		00072/2013/LEX	11/12/2013	CSL	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2014)87	30/01/2014	EC	
Follow-up document		SWD(2016)0257	26/07/2016	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		SWD(2017)0125	30/03/2017	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		SWD(2018)0107	12/04/2018	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2019)0057	07/02/2019	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		SWD(2019)0014	07/02/2019	EC	
Follow-up document		SWD(2019)0153	01/04/2019	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		SWD(2019)0431	04/12/2019	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		SWD(2020)0403	23/12/2020	EC	
Follow-up document		SWD(2022)0026	02/02/2022	EC	
Follow-up document		COM(2022)0635	18/11/2022	EC	
Follow-up document		SWD(2022)0363	18/11/2022	EC	

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

[Regulation 2013/1294](#)
[OJ L 347 20.12.2013, p. 0209](#) Summary

Final legislative act with provisions for delegated acts

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

PURPOSE: to establish an action programme for customs in the EU for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020).

LEGISLATIVE ACT: amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: on 29 June 2011, the Commission adopted a [proposal](#) for the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework for the period 2014-2020, proposing among other things, a new Customs programme.

The customs union implies the management of large trade volumes on a daily basis handling 7 customs declarations every second - requiring customs to strike a balance between the facilitation of trade for business and the protection of citizens against risks to their safety and security. This can only be achieved through intense operational cooperation between customs administrations of the Member States, between them and other authorities, with trade and other third parties.

From an economic point of view, action at EU level is much more efficient. The backbone of the customs cooperation is a highly secured dedicated communication network. It interconnects national customs administrations in approximately 5 000 connection points. If such an infrastructure were not available, Member States would have to link 26 times to the national systems of each of the other Member States.

The proposed programme is the successor programme of the Customs 2013 programme which ends on 31 December 2013.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: considering the overall policy context and problems ahead for customs in the next decade, a number of policy options has been analysed and compared:

- Option 1: baseline: continuing the programme with the current objectives and design.
- Option 2: no continuation of the programme.
- Option 3: increased support to EU legal obligations such as the Modernised Customs Code (MCC): this policy option would extend the baseline scenario tailoring the programme to the new needs deriving from the evolving customs union environment, including the

Union Customs Code (UCC).

- Option 4: increased support to EU legal obligations and financial support for technical capacity building: besides the components in the previous option, this option would include a financial support scheme allowing Member States to request support to acquire equipment to control borders-for instance scanners or laboratory equipment.
- Option 5: increased support to EU legal obligations with a maximised shared IT environment.

The impact assessment identified Option 3 as the preferred option as it scores best on acceptability by Member States.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 33 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the draft Regulation proposes to establish a multi-annual action programme "Customs 2020" to support the functioning of the customs union, and covering the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020.

Scope: the programme will support customs cooperation in the Union clustered around human networking and competency building, on the one hand, and IT capacity building on the other hand.

- The first cluster allows for the exchange of good practices and operational knowledge amongst the Member States and incidentally other countries participating in the programme.
- The latter enables the programme to fund appropriate IT infrastructure and systems that allow customs administrations in the Union to evolve to fully-fledged e-administrations.

The programme will be open to participation by Member States, candidate countries and potential candidates. Countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy will also have the option of taking part in the programme under certain conditions. External experts may also participate in specific actions (e.g. representatives of other authorities, trade, national and international organisations, and possibly other experts), if required to realise the programme objectives.

Objectives: these address the problems identified and challenges expected for customs in the next decade. The specific objective of the programme shall be to support the functioning of the customs union, in particular through cooperation between participating countries, their customs authorities, other competent authorities, their officials and external experts.

The programme will have the following priorities:

- to support the preparation, coherent application and effective implementation of Union law;
- to strengthen the competitiveness of European businesses through the facilitation of legitimate trade, the reduction of compliance costs and administrative burden, and the protection against unfair competition;
- to support customs in protecting citizens, safety and security and the environment;
- to ensure the protection of the financial and economic interests of the EU and Member States;
- to contribute to the efficient functioning of customs authorities by improving their administrative capacity;
- to fight fraud and to enhance competitiveness, safety and security through cooperation with international organisations, third countries, other governmental authorities, economic operators and their organisations.

The main added value of the programme is generated by enhancing the capacity of Member States to raise revenue and managing increasingly complex trade flows, while cutting costs in developing the tools for these purposes.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the timing of the review of EU funding programmes is linked to the [proposal for a new Multiannual Financial Framework](#). In accordance with that proposal, this Regulation on the Customs 2020 programme contains a budgetary framework of EUR 548 080 000 (in current prices) for the period of 2014-2020.

The Customs 2020 programme will be implemented by means of a direct central management mode and in a priority-based manner. Work programmes are established together with the stakeholders- stipulating the priorities for a specific period.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the report by Raffaele BALDASSARRE (EPP, IT) on the amended proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme for customs in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020) and repealing Decision No 624/2007/EC.

The committee recommends that the position of the European Parliament adopted in first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

General objective fight against fraud: given the dynamics of the new challenges and the need to protect citizens from security and safety risks posed by international trade in goods, Members feel that additional emphasis should be placed on combating fraud. The general objective of the programme shall be to support the functioning of the customs union and to strengthen the internal market, through an efficient and effective modernisation of the customs union by means of cooperation between participating countries, their customs authorities, their officials and external experts.

Specific and operational objectives: for reasons of increased visibility and legal clarity it is appropriate to establish general, specific as well as operational objectives in the Articles of the Regulation.

One of the specific objectives aims to fight fraud, protect intellectual property and to enhance competitiveness, safety and security by enhancing cooperation with international organisations, Union authorities such as the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF), third countries, other governmental authorities and economic operators and their organisations.

The progress made on each of the specific objectives shall be measured by a set of indicators that shall be established and, if necessary, modified in an annual work programme.

These shall be measured against pre-defined baselines reflecting the situation before implementation.

Support for strengthening technical capacity: in order to ensure comprehensive support for various aspects of engagement by customs

authorities, the Programme should cover not only the joint actions, IT capacity building and human competency building, but also technical capacity building, and particularly in the area of acquisition and maintenance of the requisite technical equipment.

Information systems component: to increase legal certainty it is necessary to indicate a reference to the provision which defines the terms "Union components" and "non-Union components". The report clearly indicates that the Union shall bear the cost of acquisitions, development, and maintenance of the Union components, whereas the costs relating to the non-Union components shall be borne by the participating countries.

Allocation of the budget: bearing in mind the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework (MFF), Members left blank the amount of the financial envelope. They stress, however, that the co-legislators should have the prerogative of giving political guidance in terms of the distribution of spending amounts.

Furthermore, as the European Information Systems constitute an essential element of the programme, the report suggests that financial support for the acquisition and maintenance of technical equipment should be no higher than 10 %.

Annual work programme delegated acts: as the annual work programme contains elements that are significant policy choices (priorities, adjustment to the breakdown of the budget, indicators to measure the performance) intended to supplement or amend the primary policy shaping elements in this Regulation, Members propose to delegate powers to the Commission with respect to adoption of the annual work programme.

Reports: the Commission shall submit the mid-term evaluation report to the European Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2018 and the final evaluation report by 30 June 2022. If the mid-term evaluation report reveals major shortcomings in the programme, the Commission shall consider presenting a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council for amendment of the programme.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

The European Parliament adopted by 585 votes to 18, with 4 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the amended proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme for customs in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020) and repealing Decision No 624/2007/EC.

Parliament adopted its position at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council. They amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Programme objectives: Parliament stated that the general objective of the Programme should be support the functioning and modernisation of the customs union in order to strengthen the internal market by means of cooperation between participating countries, their customs authorities and their officials.

The specific objectives shall be to: (i) support customs authorities in protecting the financial and economic interests of the Union and of the Member States, including the fight against fraud and the protection of intellectual property rights; (ii) increase safety and security; (iii) protect citizens and the environment; (iv) improve the administrative capacity of the customs authorities and; (v) strengthen the competitiveness of European businesses.

At the operational level, Customs 2020 should:

- support the preparation, coherent application and effective implementation of Union law and policy in the field of customs;
- develop, improve, operate and support the European Information Systems for customs;
- identify, develop, share and apply best working practices and administrative procedures, in particular further to benchmarking activities;
- reinforce the skills and competences of customs officials;
- improve cooperation between customs authorities and international organisations, third countries, other governmental authorities, including Union and national market surveillance authorities, as well as economic operators and organisations representing economic operators.

Financial Framework: the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2014-2020 is set at EUR 522 943 000 in current prices. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the European Parliament and the Council within the limits of the multiannual financial framework.

The indicative allocation of funds to eligible actions is the following:

- Joint actions: maximum 20%;
- IT capacity building: at least 75%;
- Human competency building: maximum 5%.

Union financial support for eligible actions shall take the form of: (a) grants; (b) public procurement contracts; (c) reimbursement of costs incurred by the external experts.

Delegated acts: in order to respond appropriately to changes in policy priorities, the power to adopt acts should be delegated to the Commission in respect of amending the list of indicators to measure the achievement of the specific objectives and modifying the indicative amounts allocated to each type of action.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

PURPOSE : to establish a multi-annual action programme Customs 2020 to improve the functioning of the customs union.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Regulation (EU) n° 1294/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme for customs in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020) and repealing Decision No 624/2007/EC.

CONTENT : in order to ensure the continuation of the previous multi-annual action programme for customs, this Regulation establishes a new programme in the same area, the Customs 2020 programme to support the functioning of the customs union.

The Programme shall be open to participation by acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates benefiting from a pre-accession strategy, as well as partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy under certain conditions.

Specific objectives: these shall be to: (i) support customs authorities in protecting the financial and economic interests of the Union and of the Member States, including the fight against fraud and the protection of intellectual property rights, (ii) increase safety and security, (iii) protect citizens and the environment, (iv) improve the administrative capacity of the customs authorities and (v) strengthen the competitiveness of European businesses.

The operational objectives of the Programme shall be to:

- support the preparation, coherent application and effective implementation of Union law and policy in the field of customs;
- support the European Information Systems for customs;
- develop, share and apply best working practices and administrative procedures, in particular further to benchmarking activities;
- reinforce the skills and competences of customs officials;
- improve cooperation between customs authorities and international organisations, third countries, other governmental authorities, as well as economic operators.

Financial framework: the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2014-2020 is set at EUR 522 943 000 in current prices. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the European Parliament and the Council within the limits of the multiannual financial framework.

Indicative amounts shall be allocated to eligible actions as follows:

- Joint actions (seminars and workshops, project groups, information and communication activities: maximum 20 %
- IT capacity building: at least 75 %
- Human competency building: maximum 5 %

Union financial support for eligible actions shall take the form of: (a) grants; (b) public procurement contracts; (c) reimbursement of costs incurred by the external experts.

Evaluation: the Commission shall, by 30 June 2018, draw up a mid-term evaluation report on the achievement of the objectives of the actions under the Programme, the efficiency of the use of resources and the added value of the Programme at the European level. By 31 December 2021, it shall draw up a final evaluation report.

The Commission will be assisted by the Customs 2020 Committee for the implementation of the Programme.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 23.12.2013. The Regulation is applicable from 01.01.2014.

DELEGATED ACTS : the Commission may adopt delegated acts in order to respond appropriately to changes in policy priorities. The power to adopt such acts is conferred on the Commission for a period starting on 1 January 2014 and ends on 31 December 2020. The European Parliament or the Council may raise objections with regard to a delegated act within two months of the date of notification (which may be extended by two months). If Parliament or Council raise objections, the delegated act will not enter into force.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

This Commission staff working Paper on the Customs 2020 programme concerns the progress report for 2014.

The report highlighted that 2014 was an exceptional year as it included a transition between two generations of Customs programmes (Customs 2013 to Customs 2020).

Key strengths in 2014:

- High level of achievement of results of the Joint Actions. This indicates that the business owners see the value of the programme for achieving the policy objectives.
- Very positive evaluation of the achieved results of the Joint Actions, their usefulness and met expectations by national customs officials who participated in them. Participants find that the programme activities correspond to their stated objectives and are professionally useful to them.
- Networking and sharing of programme outputs represent both a strength and a room for improvement. The indicators are high and testify to the networking value provided to the participants by the programme and to the fact that the outputs are often shared nationally through dissemination or training sessions.
- The volume of data traffic on European Information Systems significantly increased in 2014, while the performance and availability remained very high.
- The increased use of programmes information and collaboration space (PICS) by national and European customs officials. The number of online groups has nearly doubled during the year, with significant increases in the number of users and the number of exchanged files on the platform.

Main recommendations:

- Monitor the number of participants: the number of participants has been steadily decreasing over the years, with 2014 representing an exceptionally strong decrease in this respect. While this seems to be an exceptional situation due to the change of programmes, it is recommended to keep an eye on the number of participants in the future in order to evaluate whether any action aimed at reversing this trend is warranted.

- Increase awareness about the programme: national customs officials, beyond those already participating in the programme activities, should be addressed through a targeted communication strategy informing them of the programme and its potential benefits to them.
- Provide additional support to networking and the use of the programme outputs: a knowledge management policy for the use of programme outputs would open up the programme benefits to new users and facilitate the sharing and findability of programme outputs.
- Improve statistics for online collaboration: better statistics are needed in order to separate customs / tax groups and users on programmes information and collaboration space (PICS), as well as differentiate among them based on more precise work areas.
- Monitor the implementation and take up of the Customs Competency Framework (CFW): while much of the work on the Customs Competency Framework was done during 2014, the roll out of the framework into the national training programmes will begin in 2015.
- Facilitate the collection and processing of data under the Performance Measurement Framework.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

The Commission staff working paper on the Customs 2020 programme concerns the progress report for 2015. It notes that 2015 represented a return to a more standard programme year, following the exceptional nature of 2014 as the first (and shorter in duration) year of the new Customs 2020 programme.

The indicators obtained under the framework in 2015 give an overall positive assessment, suggesting that the programme was on course to fulfilling its objectives and that it played an important role in facilitating the development of Union customs policy through its European Information Systems, joint actions and human competency building.

The key strengths and achievements are largely the same as in 2014:

- increased demand for programme support: there was a general increase in the number of activities, organised events and participation levels. In the area of IT, there is an increased demand for programme support in the development of new systems;
- an increased level of achievement of results of the joint actions, particularly working visits, is reported by the action managers;
- a positive assessment of the results of the joint actions in terms of their usefulness;
- networking among programme participants remains high;
- the volume of data traffic on European Information Systems increased by a large margin in 2015;
- the Customs Competency Framework was rolled out, and a third of European customs administrations are already aligned with the framework;
- the use of online collaboration (PICS) by national and European customs officials significantly increased.

The 2015 indicators do not warrant any specific new conclusions, but a number of those from 2014 are further specified:

- there continues to be a discrepancy between what action managers and national participants report concerning the sharing of programme outputs at the national level. A more structured and transparent approach to the sharing of programme outputs would be desirable, but this approach would need to address a number of security, privacy and technical challenges. The Commission initiated in 2016 discussions on creating such an approach. Progress in this initiative should be seen as a longer-term goal that will require gradual change, both in terms of securing necessary stakeholders' support and possible adaptations of IT systems;
- although the response rate among action managers and participants to working visits is rising, the response rate among the participants to other types of joint actions has fallen from 68% in 2014 to 55% in 2015. The Commission and national programme teams should try to bring it above the 70% mark.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

This Commission staff working paper on the Customs 2020 programme concerns the progress report for 2016.

The report highlighted that 2016 was the third year of activities under the Customs 2020 programme and in many ways similar to 2015. The indicators give an overall positive assessment.

The numbers of actions, events and participants remained at high levels, testifying to a strong demand from business owners and national administrations for programme activities.

Budget and new joint action (expert teams): there were no significant changes to the budget, notwithstanding a slight increase in committed expenses dedicated to the new type of joint actions introduced during the year - the expert teams.

In the area of joint actions, an innovative instrument called expert teams was rolled out in the Customs 2020 programme. The expert teams are flexible structures that allow to further both EU-wide and regional co-operation between national customs administrations in order to support daily operational work as identified by the Member States. Three expert teams were launched in 2016 in the area of cooperation to manage the eastern and south-eastern land border (CELBET), making best use of resources in customs classification issues (Binding Tariff Information - BTI) and in customs laboratories. While the BTI and laboratories teams only started their work in 2016, but the first results will be visible in 2017, in the case of CELBET significant progress was already registered during the year.

The key observations that can be deduced from the analysis of the performance measurement framework indicators in 2016 are as follows:

- strong demand for programme support: this can be seen in the stable levels of the number of activities, organised events and participation levels. These levels are high and similar to 2015 numbers;
- high level of achievement of results of the joint actions is reported by the action managers: the measured level of 3 corresponds to results achieved to a large extent. This is the case for all joint actions, but especially for working visits. This indicates that the business owners see the value of the programme for achieving the policy objectives;

- very positive assessment of the achieved results of the joint actions, their usefulness and met expectations by national customs officials who participated in them: with minor fluctuations between the two years, the values remain high and above targets. This shows that the programme participants find that the programme activities correspond to their stated objectives and are professionally useful to them;
- networking among programme participants remains high: with smaller fluctuations, the networking indicator remains high and testifies to the networking value provided to the participants by the programme;
- raising awareness about the programme and its potential among the target audience: this is an important precondition to fulfilling the programmes objectives. The awareness is measured through the Programme Poll, which is distributed in all the customs administrations of the participating countries every 18 months. The report observed that 55% of all customs officials in Europe are aware of the Customs 2020 programme, which represents a rise in the awareness of 4% compared to the 2014 Poll;
- the European Information Systems are regularly upgraded and improved and resistant to increased volume of data traffic: the volume of data traffic on European Information Systems increased by a large margin in 2016, while the performance and availability remained very high. One new system was launched and new developments are largely taking place in line with the planning. The systems are regularly maintained and updated and the user support and training are functioning properly;
- successful introduction of the expert teams tool: while the teams are at various stages of their work, the CELBET team already made significant progress in 2016. The first results include mapping and analysis of the non-commercial border crossing points and the carrying out of joint operational random controls;
- significant increase in new training modules and trained customs officials: an extensive UCC EU eLearning programme has been developed and deployed in support of the implementation of the new Union Customs Code (UCC). In total, 23 685 customs officials were trained using available eLearning modules. This represents an equivalent of 1 080 classroom classes or 4 classes daily during the whole year of 2016. In addition, the UCC EU eLearning courses have been downloaded almost 10 000 times via the public website EUROPA in 2016.

The Commission concluded that the 2016 the programme was on course to fulfilling its objectives and that it played an important role in facilitating the implementation and development of Union customs policy through its European Information Systems, joint actions and human competency building.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

The Commission presents a report on the mid-term evaluation of the Customs 2020 programme.

Its purpose being to assess the Customs 2020 programme since its launch on 1 January 2014 up to the halfway point of its implementation (31 December 2017).

The current report aims to chart the progress made in the following areas:

Achievement of the programmes objectives

The programme has been effective in achieving its objectives and has contributed significantly to the proper functioning of the Customs Union and modernising it. It has fostered cooperation and the exchange of information, ranging from facilitating convergence at the strategic level to approximating approaches, interpretation, administrative procedures, best practice and rules at the operational level. The secure platform for exchanging information has helped Member States and economic operators to overcome their reluctance to share sensitive data and has built trust. The value of human networks and personal contacts has been among the programmes most appreciated benefits.

Efficiency of resource usage and aspects of simplification

The Customs 2020 programmes overall budget is EUR 522 943 000, with EUR 288 722 000 committed in 2014-2017. Nearly 85 % of the budget has been spent on developing, operating and maintaining the European Information Systems. These common IT systems are clearly resource-intensive. However, they bring an array of benefits in all areas of customs activities, including standardisation of customs procedures, uniform implementation of customs law, sharing of information and generating economies of scale. Their importance in terms of modernising customs to create a paperless environment is invaluable.

Different benefits arise from the joint actions and training activities, which provide a framework for broad and inclusive continuous collaboration, increasing understanding, knowledge and capacity, creating professional relationships and acting as catalysts. The common IT systems and databases supported by the programme lead directly to a simpler, more robust and more reliable technological framework that is easy to maintain and support.

Although simplification as such is not one of the programmes objectives, the programme does provide support to other initiatives that are designed to simplify and modernise the customs environment. Some efficiency gains have also been achieved in terms of synergies between the Customs 2020 and Fiscalis 2020 programmes. While the policy areas for the two programmes differ, they share a similar focus in enabling administrations to cooperate and exchange information.

Continued relevance of the programme

Through its different iterations, the Customs programme has been in place for over 25 years and has evolved with the single market. There are 34 countries that currently participate in the programme: 28 EU Member States and 6 candidate and potential candidate countries.

It is deemed highly relevant for the broad needs of a well-functioning EU Customs Union and in particular meeting the needs of customs administrations, economic operators and European citizens.

Coherence with and contribution to the EUs broader policies and other initiatives

Internal coherence between the different features, components and design of the programme is extremely strong, with a high level of consistency between the intervention logic and objectives of the programme and its execution. The various activities also strengthen and complement each other, enhancing the results of the programme.

The Customs 2020 programme plays an integral part in the EUs broader policies and coherent with the EUs goal of creating a modern, paperless environment for customs and trade, while preserving the EUs financial, economic and societal interests and well-being.

Added value of the programme at EU level

The Customs 2020 programmes greatest EU added value lies in supporting all aspects of Union Custom Code (UCC) implementation, which require EU solutions for EU problems and close cooperation of the Member States; they need to apply the same rules and assist each other in pursuing the Customs Unions objectives. The programme has provided for financial sustainability of the interoperable and interconnected European Information Systems, meeting the requirements of the UCC with greater economies of scale and efficiency.

Customs 2020 has created tangible outputs and helped customs officials acquire skills and exchange experiences. However, none of the programmes outputs would likely continue beyond the short term if the programme were to be discontinued. Existing differences would persist and networks built and improved thanks to years of collaboration would fade.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

This Commission staff working paper on the Customs 2020 programme concerns the progress report for 2017.

The report highlighted that 2017 was the fourth year of activities under the Customs 2020 programme and in many ways similar to 2016.

The numbers of European Information Systems (and their availability), actions, events, trainings and participants remained at high levels, testifying to a strong demand from business owners and national administrations for programme activities.

Budget and new joint action (expert teams)

There were no significant changes to the budget, notwithstanding the absence in committed expenses dedicated to the new type of joint actions introduced during 2016 and that continued during 2017 - the Expert Teams. The vast majority of the spending under the programme continues to be spent on the European Information Systems. The IT related expenditure is projected to rise further in the future, as the new systems connected to the Union Customs Code continue to be developed.

In the area of joint actions, the co-operation between the Commission and national administration in the running and functioning of the customs union would be impossible without the use of project groups, seminars, workshops, working visits, monitoring visits, capacity building activities and other types of joint actions.

Key observations

These can be deduced from the analysis of the performance measurement framework indicators in 2017 are as follows:

- continued strong demand for programme support. This can be seen in the stable levels of the number of activities, organised events and participation levels. These levels are high and similar to 2016 numbers;
- high level of achievement of results of the joint actions is reported by the action managers. The measured level of 3 corresponds to "results achieved to a large extent", which is the case for all joint actions. This indicates that, as in previous years, the business owners see the value of the programme for achieving the policy objectives;
- very positive assessment of the achieved results of the joint actions, their usefulness and met expectations by national customs officials who participated in them. The values remain high and above targets, as in previous years, with minor fluctuations over the years for some of the operational objectives. This shows that the programme participants find that the programme activities correspond to their stated objectives and are professionally useful to them;
- increase in the degree of networking among programme participants. The lasting networking averaged at around 70% during 2015-2016, rising to 84% in 2017, facilitating the exchange of best practices and better functioning of the customs union;
- the European Information Systems are regularly operated and are resistant to increased volume of data traffic. The volume of data traffic on European Information Systems increased by a large margin in 2017, while the performance and availability remained very high;
- there were key new European Information Systems that entered into operation in 2017 (in particular the Customs Decision System and REX), and many more systems entered research and development phases thanks to the support of the programme;
- successful operational development of the Expert Team tool. Three new Expert Teams that were launched during 2016, in the area of cooperation to manage the eastern and south-eastern land border (CELBET), making best use of resources in customs classification issues (BTI) and in customs laboratories, produced their main outputs during 2017;
- significant increase of customs professionals (public and private sector) trained on EU Customs eLearning modules. The use of EU Custom eLearning modules by national administrations increased in 2017 by 43% (increase in number of trained officials compared to 2016). More than 204.000 private sector professionals (traders) trained on EU Customs eLearning courses in 2017.

The Commission concluded that the indicators suggested that during the year the programme was on course to fulfilling its objectives and that it played an important role in facilitating the implementation and development of Union customs policy through its European Information Systems, joint actions and human competency building.

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

This Commission staff working paper on the Customs 2020 programme concerns the progress report for 2018.

The report highlighted that 2018 was the fifth year of activities under the Customs 2020 programme and in many ways similar to 2017.

The numbers of European Information Systems (and their availability), actions, events, trainings and participants remained at high levels, testifying to a strong demand from business owners and national administrations for programme activities.

Budget and expert teams

There were no significant changes to the budget levels of previous years, with the exception of budget allocated to expert teams: in 2017 there were no committed expenses dedicated expert teams, while in 2018 there were two new expert teams launched.

Key observations

These can be deduced from the analysis of the performance measurement framework indicators in 2018. They are as follows:

- continued strong demand for programme support;
- high level of achievement of results of the joint actions is reported by the action managers;
- increase in the degree of networking among programme participants;
- very positive assessment of the achieved results of the joint actions, their usefulness and met expectations by national customs officials who participated in them. In particular, joint actions under objective 2 (European Information Systems) got a 100% score on usefulness, as assessed by participants to these actions;
- low awareness rate, as shown by the results of the programme polls and by the conclusions of the mid-term evaluation;
- the European Information Systems portfolio was expanded. Three IT projects were completed in 2018: the Mutual Recognition Agreement with Norway and two Single Window projects for new certificates;
- existing IT systems are regularly operated and are resistant to increased volume of data traffic;
- new EU training modules and increased number of national language versions, as well as a common multi-annual Action Plan for EU Customs Training & Development (2017-2020) in place.