

# WCO letter of recommendation



## GS1 and WCO Collaborating for better Border Management

In 2007, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and GS1 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in recognition of the wide range of business interests shared by the two organisations and as a framework for future cooperation.

GS1 and the WCO agreed to exchange information on matters of common interest including the designation of contact persons to facilitate efficient cooperation, reciprocal invitations to each other's meetings, joint training activities, exchange of experts, and support for initiatives aimed at harmonizing standards in the Customs sector.

It was acknowledged that GS1 identification and e-Commerce standards could contribute to the WCO's efforts to improve trade flows at international borders, secure international supply chains, and improve product visibility. Furthermore, those standards could increase the efficiency and predictability of Customs procedures at national borders.

Under the MOU, the WCO recognised the suitability of applicable GS1 standards for cross-border operations involving Customs administrations and other border regulatory agencies.

The cooperation between GS1 and the WCO to date clearly demonstrates that many of the challenges faced by national Customs authorities could be addressed through the adoption of appropriate GS1 standards. A number of joint initiatives demonstrating that fact have already been completed and several more are contemplated:

- As mentioned above, in November 2007, GS1 and the WCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding in recognition of the wide range of business interests shared by the two organisations and to provide a framework for further cooperation.
- From 2005-2006 GS1 and the WCO successfully tested the use of the GS1 SSCC (Serial Shipping Container Code) key for Customs purposes as a UCR (Unique Consignment Reference) for track and trace and post-event audit. It was the first joint GS1, Customs and trade initiative that addressed issues of supply chain security and trade facilitation.
- GS1, by agreement with the WCO, ensured compliance of the UCR and GSIN (GS1 Global Shipment Identification Number) with ISO standards. GS1 launched a work request in the appropriate ISO committee and now GSIN is compliant with ISO/IEC 15459 and consequently with the UCR standard definition.
- GS1 Member Organisations from a number of countries have already started discussions and activities with their national Customs administrations, in international Forums, or with the WCO.
- GS1 Global Office supports and contributes to the WCO Data Model.
- Through cooperation with GS1, the WCO has been able to further develop the functionalities of its IPM (Interface Public-Members) tool, making it even more accessible and reliable.

**The WCO invites** Customs administrations and other border regulatory agencies to liaise with their local GS1 Organisation to learn how GS1 Standards could contribute to making their operations safer and more efficient.

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World Customs Organization  
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