

# MAINTENANCE OF THE SEED (SYSTEMATIC ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF DATA) SYSTEM IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

## BACKGROUND

The Customs Administrations in the Western Balkans have been working with the support of the EU to establish and improve a system on the Systematic and Automatic Exchange of Data (SEED). This electronic data exchange system is seen as a vital tool for: a) fighting different types of Customs fraud, cross-border crime and prevention of corruption, and b) trade facilitation.

Two preliminary EC-financed contracts (SEMS 2008-2009) and SEMS/SEED 2009-2010) prepared the ground for the development of SEED. However while the system concept was clear and the necessary software available, the Customs Administrations lacked the capacity to develop and implement a sustainable legal, operational and financial framework for the maintenance of the system. Therefore the EC under its Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) agreed to finance the SEED project.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To ensure continuous technical support as required by the Beneficiary Administrations, to sustain and enhance the Customs Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data (cSEED) between the Customs Administrations of the Western Balkans region.

## ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

This system comprises 6 SEED Nodes (placed at IT Centres in six Beneficiaries) and 9 direct bilateral data exchange links. A SEED server and supporting equipment have been placed at the premises of the Italian Customs and Monopolies Agency in

Rome, as well as, two bilateral communication Rome-Belgrade and Rome-Pristina allow for exchange of data between the two CEFTA Parties concerned.

The main activities of the SEED Project include:

- Geographical enlargement of the so called “SEED Pilot Actions” by the establishment of missing bilateral data exchange links between all Beneficiaries and inclusion of all customs offices in data exchange
- Extension of the scope of bilateral links by introducing data exchange on all border crossings
- Functional and operational update of SEED to allow for:
  - Analysis of pre-arrival data and alarm functions
  - Automatic data matching (automatic reconciliation of data sent at the moment of the truck exits with data declared at the entrance, of the neighbour BCP), as well as, new user requirements
  - Improvement of the transport module by development and implementation of the SEED External Communication Node (ECN)
- Technical assistance to all 6 Beneficiary Administrations for supervision and maintenance of the SEED servers (and their modules), as well as, all bilateral data exchange links
- Analysis of all collected user requirements for changes and improvements of the SEED software within current business objectives (automatic data matching, risk analysis and cross border caring of cash), and periodic corrective actions
- Provide maintenance for the running of the relevant Intellectual Property Software - INES+ applications, implement INES+ application and migrate from INES to INES+ upon request



## IMPACT ON CEFTA

At present, all data exchange links (11 in total) are up and running and underpinned by a firm legal basis established throughout the region, through bilateral Protocols (MOUs) signed between neighbouring Customs Administrations.

The SEED project makes a substantial contribution to trade facilitation in CEFTA by:

- Speeding up and facilitating of legitimate trade by more efficient use of available pre-arrival data from the neighbouring Administration
- Increase security and safety of citizens by constant monitoring of automatic data matching results and the creation and analysis of various reports

- Increasing the collection of customs duties and improvement of risk analysis resulting in a curb on illicit trade and corruption
- Improving protection of the Intellectual Property Rights
- Promoting of Integrated Border Management (IBM), by exchanging information about cross-border cash transfers

The project also contributes to transparency and capacity building among the customs administrations in CEFTA.

## SUMMARY PROJECT INFORMATION

Dates:	2013 - 2016
Budget:	€ 770,000
Partners:	Agenzia delle Dogane e dei Monopoli
Financiers:	EU (IPA)
Beneficiaries:	Customs Administrations

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