CUSTOMS 2018
FRENCH CUSTOMS
STRATEGIC PLAN
French customs’ main areas of work have been extensively modernised over the last 20 years as the European Union has enlarged and tax and customs regulations have changed. This steady reform drive has underpinned Customs’ core brief: to regulate international trade, smooth the flows of merchandise and secure legal trade while taking effective action against organised crime to protect businesses and individuals.

French customs’ anti-smuggling and overall performance reflects its hard work and the commitment of all the customs officials who work daily to protect our territory, assist our businesses and collect the duties and taxes needed to finance our public services. These positive results, driven by our customs officials’ expertise and dedication, bear witness to the strong economic and social demand for their work in a globalised environment.

At the end of 2012, we asked customs to draw up a strategic continuous improvement plan for 2018 to include new ways for each sector to further improve its performance in a tight fiscal environment.

This strategic plan has now been completed. It is designed to give all customs officials five-year visibility with ambitious targets for all their assignments. It defines key focuses for the administration: streamlining and onlining of procedures, scaled-up anti-smuggling action, changes to the organisation of French Customs action, development of new control and risk analysis tools, further work on the major tax projects, and greater support function efficiency.

This strategic plan is part of the government modernisation drive. We hope all the economy and finance ministry and foreign trade ministry departments will play a key role in it. The plan will gradually make improvements to the operations, lines of work and internal organisation of our customs service.

We know we can count on the commitment of the women and men who efficiently and devotedly serve customs every day to make this ambitious project a success and guarantee the place of the Directorate General of French Customs and Excise among the leading European customs administrations. They in turn can count on our entire support throughout this period of change and our assurance that their personal situation will be taken into account when the strategic guidelines are implemented.

Pierre Moscovici
French Minister for the Economy and Finance

Nicole Bricq
French Minister for Foreign Trade

Bernard Cazeneuve
French Minister Delegate for the Budget
Our purpose is clear: to hold up French customs as a benchmark administration for the protection of our territory, our fellow citizens and our businesses and for the regulation of trade...

Our strategic plan for French customs was developed following close to one year of broad-based consultations. Local and national working meetings discussed the plan with a large number of staff and departments and representatives of most of customs’ economic and institutional partners. I would like to thank all the staff and managers for the quality of their proposals and input.

The proposals generated by our discussions with the staff provided valuable input. A summary of these proposals is available on our Intranet server and will continue to feed into our customs modernisation work.

This work went into the definition of our strategic guidelines, which received political support from our ministers. In this complex, tight and shifting environment with sharp growth in international trade, these guidelines will structure and steer continuous improvements to our operations and organisation.

Our purpose is clear: to hold up French customs as a benchmark administration for the protection of our territory, our fellow citizens and our businesses and for the regulation of trade; an administration able to meet the major challenges that lie ahead in the coming years. The strategic plan outlines our road map for the future: streamlining and onlining of procedures, support to businesses to boost their competitiveness, scaling-up of our anti-smuggling measures, and modernisation of our taxation. This plan gives our administration’s staff greater visibility: it underpins the continuity of our work by mapping out a course of action to modernise the way we work.

It is now up to us to achieve these great customs ambitions and roll them out with due consideration for interregional particularities using realistic, stepwise work plans. We also need to define new tools and new working methods and conditions. And we need to work on skills, careers, training for new lines of work, vocational training, and staff support.

The women and men who serve French customs daily will implement the developments and reforms outlined by the strategic plan and will receive exemplary human resources support to help them. All of our customs officials will be involved to guarantee the success of this plan and firmly establish the place of customs within the ministry and our system of government.
Adjust to a changing environment

Customs controls our international trade and supports the country’s economic competitiveness in an ever-changing and fiercely competitive environment. It has to anticipate change and constantly adjust its tools and working methods to maintain its high quality of service.

The strategic plan outlines the main guidelines for French customs to work even more efficiently by taking up the best EU customs administration standards to protect our territory and its people, enhance business competitiveness and promote efficient taxation.

In its anti-smuggling work, customs is set to continue to innovate to improve its action to prevent tax and customs duty evasion, protect people from the acts of international criminal organisations and protect consumers from dangerous products. The strategic guidelines for customs therefore aim to enhance its anti-smuggling efficiency by introducing new tools and new working methods.

Customs 2018 is also innovative in its business support. It seeks to use European regulatory changes to help develop French logistical platforms. In addition, Customs 2018 provides for even more personalised relations with business – both large groups and SMEs – to support business development and competitive strength worldwide. In the tax field, too, the plan will bring modernity and streamlining.
Develop effective action against smuggling

Action to prevent smuggling and organised crime is a French customs priority. The administration adjusts and finds concrete responses to the risks generated by growing trade and globalisation in order to thwart new forms of trafficking, especially in narcotics, tobacco, counterfeits, weapons and dangerous goods. One of the main guidelines of the strategic plan is therefore to improve national and local customs control tools and steering.

The need to constantly improve the efficiency of controls will drive the introduction of new targeting methods. A Risk Analysis and Targeting Department (SARC) will therefore be set up to establish a more professional set-up for the analysis and targeting of declared flows and to focus controls on risk trade.

In road traffic surveillance, roaming customs controls will become widespread and the operational coordination of customs units will be stepped up. This move will see the establishment of operational land centres with broader geographic scope that will more closely coordinate the control teams on the ground in keeping with the new principles for action.

Continuous improvements to the organisation of the structures in charge of collecting and processing intelligence have enabled customs to streamline its controls and improve its performance in all areas of its anti-smuggling action. Under the strategic plan, French customs will strengthen its intelligence network and scale up work by the National Customs Judicial Enquiries Department (SNDJ) to improve its performance against the most serious forms of smuggling.
Support economic activity

French Customs aims to put in place new measures to support companies doing business on the international scene and French logistical platforms competing with other major customs clearance sites in the European Union.

First of all, a Large Accounts Department (SGC), a one-stop shop for large corporations, will be set up to further the development of centralised customs clearance in France under the new Union Customs Code. The SGC will be tasked with improving the management of the main foreign trade operators’ particularities in an increasingly competitive business environment. The SGC will also be briefed to support business competitiveness, guarantee the same swift processing for all businesses wherever they conduct their formalities, put in place a facilitation, streamlining and control policy tailored to their needs, and promote the appeal of France.

Local support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and intermediate-sized enterprises will be scaled up to foster their international development and better protect their markets mainly by combating competition from counterfeit and dangerous products. The establishment of the SGC will power up regional economic action by the Business Consultancy Units (CCE), which will concentrate on improving their assistance and support to SMEs and intermediate-sized enterprises in their international trade operations.

Lastly, procedures will continue to be streamlined and online procedures developed for all customs users.

Modernise taxation

The purpose of the strategic plan is to modernise and enhance the efficiency of French customs in monitoring economic activities, controls and action against tax evasion.

This aim ties in with the modernisation actions underway for a number of years now (process simplification, onlining, paperless payment, etc.) and the choices already made (one-stop pollution tax management) to secure tax collection and reduce management costs.

This move is part and parcel of the interministerial policy to streamline formalities for businesses and individuals. The next step will be the regional or interregional, if not national, centralisation of tax assignments. This will concern all items of taxation (import duties and taxes, transport, energy, environmental taxation and indirect levies).
Change the organisation

French customs will continue to change its structures for more efficiency in all areas of its work.

Coastguard steering and organisation will be optimised along with the deployment of new air and sea resources and information systems. The accounts network will be reworked to take on board centralised clearance and tax activities as well as changes made to the accountancy tools with the introduction of paperless payment and computerised management without any slippage in its high level of quality.

At the same time, the interregional customs set-up will be improved. The organisation of the decentralised customs departments will be refocused on steering the operational services for closer coordination and greater efficiency. Adjustments will also be made to the way the interregional and regional directorates interface.

Put the women and men of customs at the centre of the strategic plan

Customs 2018 is an ambitious plan containing measures that will be gradually introduced through to 2018 to enable the staff to adjust to the changes in their jobs.

In fact, given the adjustment expected of the staff and their understandable need for visibility, Customs 2018 pays particular attention to human resources support for these reforms.

The French customs strategic plan hence sets priorities that reach beyond efficient user service to embrace the modernisation of HRM practices and working conditions, staff aspirations and career ambitions.

So Customs 2018 is set to rethink the training methods and system to better prepare for current and future changes to our work. The plan focuses in particular on health and safety at work and on labour-management dialogue to effect change. It aims to optimise the recruitment policy and HRM practices with a new approach to manpower, job and skills planning.

The central and interregional HRM function will be refocused on high value-added tasks such as HR consulting and individual staff guidance with the introduction of a new ministerial human resources information system (SIRHIUS) and a human resources service centre (CSRH) that will centralise management operations at national level.

In vocational training, the La Rochelle school will dispense training courses on all customs occupations and will provide new courses starting in autumn 2015 for staff to keep in step with job and professional changes.

Particular attention will be paid to working conditions and health and safety to give staff a better quality of life at work. An annual risk prevention programme will be rolled out in all customs departments. Prevention players will be on hand throughout the programme.
Measure No. 1  Set up a Large Accounts Department (SGC).
Measure No. 2  Support the centralisation of customs clearance under the new Union Customs Code (UCC).
Measure No. 3  Support the centralisation of postal freight under the new Union Customs Code (UCC).
Measure No. 4  Step up action by the Business Consultancy Units (CCE) to assist SMEs and intermediate-sized enterprises.
Measure No. 5  Streamline transport taxation: merge the management of axle tax on commercial vehicles (TSVR) and controls of refunds of domestic consumption tax on energy products (TICPE).
Measure No. 6  Reorganise the management of the annual French flagging and navigation tax (DAFN) in association with the work conducted with the Directorate for Maritime Affairs.
Measure No. 7  Build specialised “energy” hubs, at least at regional level.
Measure No. 8  Reorganise the management of pollution tax (TGAP) with the creation of a second national management centre and create an online pollution tax return.
Measure No. 9  Online indirect levy returns (online the monthly summary statement – DRM).
Measure No. 10  Organise the management and supervision of tobacconists at regional level.
Measure No. 11  Streamline the accounts network to one revenue per interregional directorate.
Measure No. 12  Mainstream paperless payment.
Measure No. 13  Set up a Risk Analysis and Targeting Department (SARC).
Measure No. 14  Set up Interregional Control Programming Units (CIPC) to replace the Intelligence and Control Steering Units (CROC).
Measure No. 15  Set up operational land surveillance centres with broad geographic scope.
Measure No. 16  Group together certain units to build their operational capacities.
Measure No. 17  Take forward interministerial thinking on a new allocation for the manning of the border crossing points.
Measure No. 18  Take part in the PNR (Passenger Name Record) programme.
Measure No. 19  Update target figures annually to sustain the performance of measures to stop major smuggling and tax evasion in the main sectors (narcotics, counterfeits and tobacco).
Measure No. 20  Introduce new legal tools to scale up the role and powers of the National Customs Judicial Enquiries Department (SNDJ).
Measure No. 21  Improve coastguard steering and optimise their organisation.
Measure No. 22  Reconfigure the interregional-regional directorate interface to incorporate overseas particularities.
Measure No. 23  Define the main human resources policy guidelines through to 2018.
Measure No. 24  Set up a Consultancy, Professional Mobility and Careers Unit.
Measure No. 25  Centralise the training system and upgrade the technical training courses.
Measure No. 26  Make the information system (IS) a priority track of the customs strategy for 2018.
Measure No. 27  Set up a dedicated process re-engineering and administrative streamlining structure.