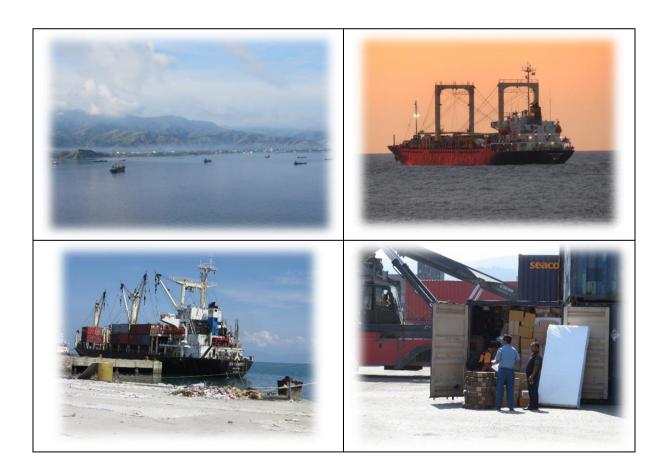
TIMOR-LESTE CUSTOMS AUTHORITY

TIMOR-LESTE QUARANTINE SERVICE

NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF MARITIME TRANSPORT

CUSTOMS BROKER'S ASSOCIATION OF TIMOR-LESTE

# TIMOR-LESTE TIME RELEASE STUDY 2019 Final Report



# Contents

Introduction	3
Snapshot	5
Methodology, Scope & Execution	7
Metrics	8
ASYCUDA Channel Selections	10
Quarantine	12
Next steps	13
Action Plan	14
Appendix 1 - TRS Questionnaire 2019	17
Appendix 2 - ASYCUDA World Timestamps/TRS Questionnaire 2019	19
Appendix 3 - TRS Database Report (Ship arrives at Anchor to Validate E	xit
Note/Container leaves Port)	20

### Introduction

The Government of Timor-Leste is committed to improving trade facilitation by reducing the time and cost to trade.

Timor-Leste has been a member of the World Customs Organization (WCO) since September 2003. In April 2015 it submitted a formal application to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in December 2016 Timor-Leste was granted observer status in the organisation and set up a working party to study the issue of full Timorese accession.

Timor-Leste prioritized membership of the WTO "as it wanted to leverage the on-going improvements in its infrastructure, human capital and administrative capital and accelerate growth and economic diversification. It would be a complimentary process to Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN<sup>1</sup>". The Council of Ministers recently received a progress report on the accession process to join the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) and will host an ASEAN mission in September 2019 as part of this process.

Timor-Leste commenced work on a Trade Facilitation Diagnostic in 2016 with a focus on compliance with the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) that was signed at a WTO Trade Minister's meeting in Bali, Indonesia in December 2013. Article 7.6 of the TFA encourages Members "to measure and publish their average release time of goods periodically and in a consistent manner, using tools such as, inter alia, the Time Release Study of the World Customs Organization". Measuring the time taken for the release of goods helps to address the concerns of the trading community regarding long delays in goods release. It helps Customs, Quarantine and other border agencies to respond to the private sectors' need for predictability, while providing specific, evidence-based recommendations for process improvement.

As a member of the WCO, Timor-Leste has access to the full range of capacity building programs and tools. One of these tools is the Time Release Study (TRS) software and it was used to record and analyse the information for this Study.

The TRS is a key component of the government's border agencies engagement with industry. It underpins the border agencies commitment to identify areas for improvement, establish a forward work program and implement change. It provides an evidence base to support decision making as well as ensuring the process is transparent to industry and other government agencies.

The World Customs Organisation (WCO) believes that it is important for Customs administrations in collaboration with relevant government agencies and stakeholders, to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of border clearance processes, in order to optimise trade facilitation and thus ultimately improve overall performance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> H.E. Estanislau Alexio da Silva, WTO, Geneva, 2019

The core objectives of the TRS are:

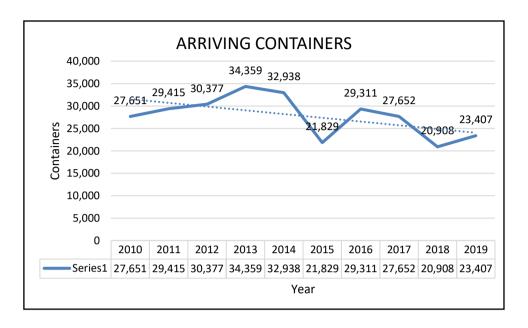
- To provide evidence-based analysis to identify bottlenecks and support procedural reforms;
- To provide predictability to the trading community regarding time needed to clear goods;
- To provide a baseline for national governments and international donors to support further investments in reform and modernization.

The TRS is not an exercise to assign blame to any stakeholder for present-day delays or bottlenecks. Rather, it is a forward-looking exercise, whereby public and private stakeholders work together to critically review existing procedures and use evidence-based analysis to make specific recommendations for reforms. For the Study to be constructive, it is important that all border stakeholders – both public and private – support the conduct of the study and contribute to the resulting analysis and recommendations.

The National TRS Working Group thanks all the officers from the Customs, Quarantine, the Port Authority and the Customs Brokers who provided invaluable support, assistance and participation in TRS 2019.

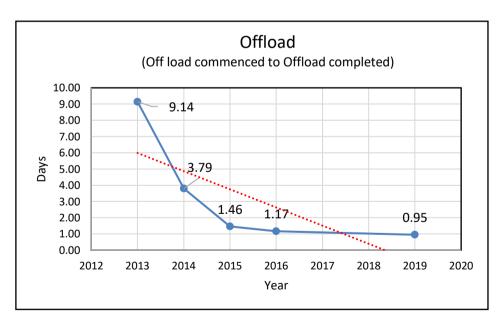
# Snapshot

### GRAPH 1 - ARRIVING CONTAINERS



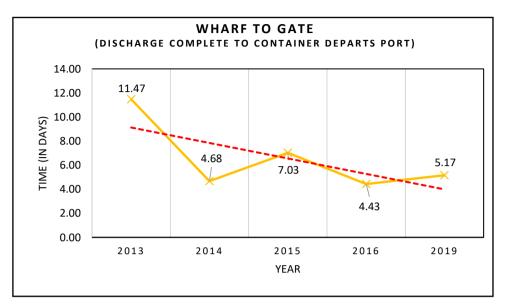
The figure for 2019 is an estimation based on actual arriving containers in the period from January to June and extrapolated out to December 2019.

### **GRAPH 2 - OFFLOAD**



Port activity continues to improve. Changes to the berthing arrangements, upgraded port infrastructure and reduced container traffic are some of the key reasons for the lower processing times.

### **GRAPH 3 - WHARF to GATE**



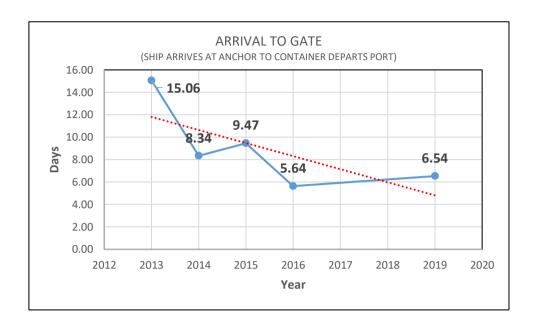
The increase in overall processing time appears to be due to 'dwell time<sup>2</sup>'. In 2019 there is significant dwell time<sup>3</sup> between the cargo being offloaded and the customs broker registering the Single Administrative Document (SAD). There is also dwell time<sup>4</sup> between the registration and submission of the SAD. Both require further investigation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In this context, dwell time is defined as that average time the regulatory process is 'suspended' pending production of documentation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See Table 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Table 1

### GRAPH 4 - ARRIVAL to GATE



The trend line<sup>5</sup> is important and highlights the continuing effort of border agencies, the Port Authority, Customs Brokers and importers for continuous improvement in Timor-Leste.

### Methodology, Scope & Execution

In the years 2013 to 2016 the Time Release Study was 'managed' by representatives from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group.

For TRS 2019, the Director-General of the Timor-Leste Customs Authority, Mr. José Antonio Abilio requested IFC to oversight technical capacity building for the TRS Working Group to enable future TRS to be conducted solely by the Timor-Leste border agencies in collaboration with the private sector. The WCO TRS Guide<sup>6</sup> was used as the reference document for this Study.

The Director-General appointed a national TRS Working Group (the Working Group) comprising personnel from Customs, Quarantine, APORTIL and the Customs Brokers. Members of the Working Group would form the basis of the team to conduct the TRS in 2020.

In March 2019 the Working Group was convened to scope the TRS, review process maps, review TRS 2016 survey questionnaire, confirm the dates for TRS 2019 and prepare a TRS operational plan.

Time Release Study 2019

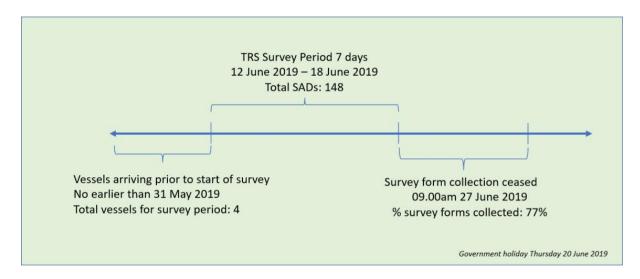
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The increase in overall time is to be investigated by the WTS Working Group.

http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/resources/~/media/01713916ED2A4BD38DC119C5E64B890D.pdf

To verify and confirm the survey questionnaire, the Working Group using a draft TRS questionnaire undertook a TRS Test Run exercise. The exercise called for the Working Group to form 4 multi-agency teams and each was assigned a recently completed import clearance declaration. Each team, using the draft TRS questionnaire, needed to retrospectively identify the source data at each data collection point and record the timestamp (if available). The TRS Test Run, identified several changes to the process and resulted in a re-design of the questionnaire. The majority of changes were directly related to the Customs upgrade and implementation of ASYCUDA World from ASYCUDA++.

The questionnaire contains 42 'events' or 'metrics<sup>7</sup>'. Unlike previous TRS, many of the metrics were able to be cross-checked against time stamps recorded in ASYCUDA World<sup>8</sup>. Using ASYCUDA World in the future will make conducting a TRS easier and provide the border agencies and the private sector with greater flexibility and accuracy.

The TRS survey period was seven (7) days starting Wednesday 12 June 2019 and concluding on Tuesday 18 June 2019.



Analysis of the survey was conducted using the World Customs Organization (WCO) TRS Online database<sup>9</sup>. This database provides the IT support for the storage of data and subsequent analysis and production of reports. Within Customs, the ASYCUDA team provided the personnel to input the completed questionnaires to the system.

### **Metrics**

The following metrics are not exhaustive. However, they do show elapsed time between specific tasks in the import clearance process and provide an opportunity to identify potential bottlenecks or 'dwell time'.

<sup>8</sup> See Attachment 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Attachment 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Access to use the WCO Online Database was provided to nominated Timor-Leste Customs officials on the TRS Working Group and the supporting IFC facilitators.

Many of these metrics are new as the import clearance process changed following the implementation of ASYCUDA World in 2018. As such, it is not possible to compare identical activities year on year.

Several metrics have remained the same since the first TRS e.g. *Ship arriving at Anchor to the Container departing the Port*<sup>11</sup>. This measurement provides an instant reference point or baseline for the time taken to clear the container through the port. It does not cover those containers or goods subject to quarantine or examination by other government agencies.

Table 1

Events	Time
APORTIL	
[1. Ship Arrives at Anchor] - [3. Cargo/Container Offload Commences]	0d 16h 45m
[1. Ship Arrives at Anchor] - [9. Broker registers SAD] {Green/Blue Channel}	3d 15h 34m
[1. Ship Arrives at Anchor] - [14. Broker registers SAD] {Red/Yellow Channel}	2d 23h 56m
[1. Ship Arrives at Anchor] - [32. Validate Exit Note/Container leaves port]	6d 12h 51m
[3. Cargo/Container Offload Commences] - [4. Offload Completed]	0d 22h 47m
Customs Front Counter	
[4. Offload Completed] - [9. Broker registers SAD] {Green/Blue Channel}	3d 20h 56m
[4. Offload Completed] - [14. Broker registers SAD] {Red/Yellow Channel}	4d 12h 49m
[4. Offload Completed] - [32. Validate Exit Note/Container leaves port]	5d 4h 11m
Green/Blue Channel	
[9. Broker registers SAD] - [12. Broker submit SAD to CREP]	1d 20h 46m
[12. Broker submit SAD to CREP] - [13. Send Copy 1/2 to Sea Port Office]	0d 10h 1m
[13. Send Copy 1/2 to Sea Port Office] - [22. Record receipt of Copy 1/2 from CREP]	0d 0h 57m
[22. Record receipt of Copy 1/2 from CREP] - [23. Record receipt of Copy 2/2 from Broker/Importer]	0d 23h 47m
[9. Broker registers SAD] - [32. Validate Exit Note/Container leaves port]	3d 8h 17m
Red/Yellow Channel	
[14. Broker registers SAD] - [16. Broker submits SAD]	0d 10h 58m
[16. Broker submits SAD] - [20. Send Copy 1/2 to Sea Port Office]	0d 13h 25m
[20. Send Copy 1/2 to Sea Port Office] - [22. Record receipt of Copy 1/2 from CREP]	0d 15h 18m
[22. Record receipt of Copy 1/2 from CREP] - [23. Record receipt of Copy 2/2 from Broker/Importer]	0d 23h 47m
[23. Record receipt of Copy 2/2 from Broker/Importer] - [32. Validate Exit Note/Container leaves port]	0d 17h 52m
Quarantine	
[33. Broker submits SAD] - [35. Broker submit SAD to CREP]	0d 4h 25m
[37. Inspection commences] - [40. Inspection completed]	0d 15h 20m
[40. Inspection completed] - [43. Goods released]	0d 0h 44m

The event descriptors listed above have been extracted from the TRS questionnaire<sup>12</sup>. The time shown were extracted from the TRS database. Each of the events above has a Report Summary can be generated from the database. For example, under APORTIL above, the measurement of the elapsed time between the *Ship arriving at Anchor (1) and Validate Exit Note/Container leaves port (32)* is at Appendix 3.

The TRS Report show a variety of timing intervals between two events.

Copies of all the TRS Reports are held by the TRS Working Group.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Graph 4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Appendix 1.

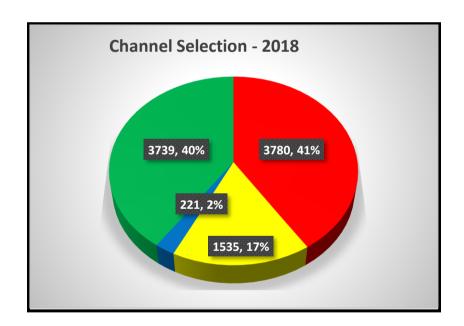
### **ASYCUDA Channel Selections**

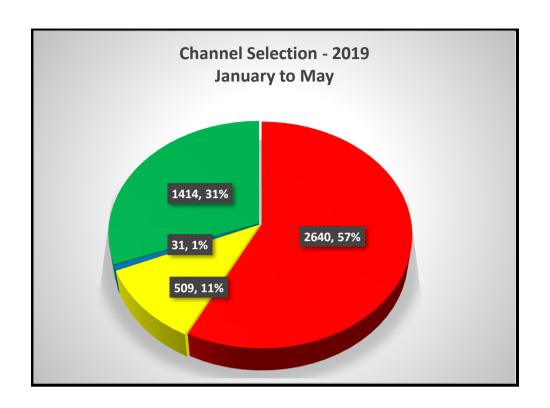
Table 2

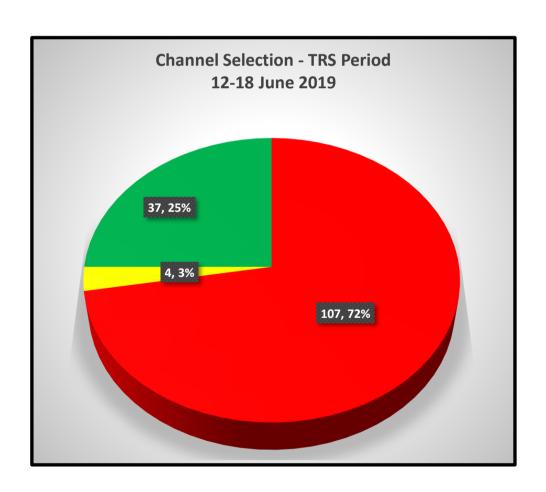
Year	Red	Yellow	Blue	Green	Total
2018	3780	1535	221	3739	9275
2019 (Jan: Jun)	2640	509	31	1414	4594
2019_TRS (12-18 June)	107	4	0	37	148

The table above and charts below show the changing profile of channel selections in the ASYCUDA system over the past two years. This has been identified by the TRS Working Group as an activity requiring further examination as the percentage of Red selections is high by comparison with other countries and international best practice.

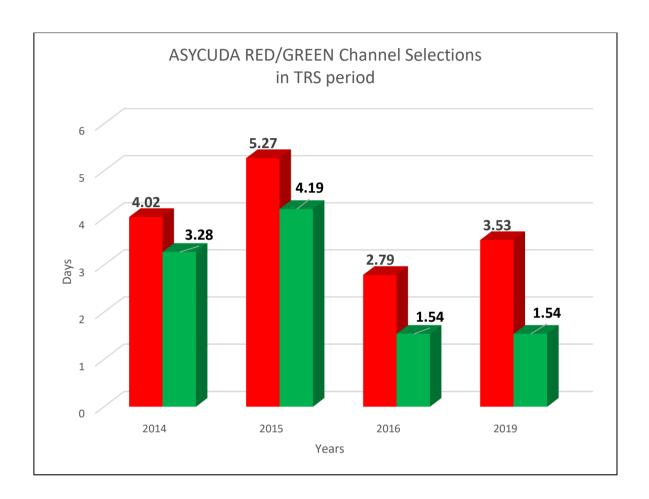
The Working Group has separately requested details of the compliance rate for all goods subject to ASYCUDA selections i.e. Red, Blue, Green & Yellow.







One metric that was available for comparison with previous year results<sup>14</sup> was the number of days taken to clear goods in the Red and Green channels. There was an increase in the Red channel time in 2019 and this will be subject to examination and analysis by the TRS Working Group.



### Quarantine

The TRS survey measures only the Quarantine on-arrival import clearance process and excludes the process for issuance of an import permit. The on-arrival import clearance process includes Quarantine document screening, physical inspection of goods and quarantine release. Therefore, the metrics for Quarantine goods is only a part of the story of the Quarantine process.

The rationale for measuring only part of the Quarantine process is all quarantine risk goods arriving in Timor-Leste are required to have an import permit issued <u>prior</u> to the arrival of the goods in Timor-Leste.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Only measured during the TRS period

The TRS does not measure the time taken for the importer/broker to obtain these documents and submit to the Timor-Leste Quarantine Service.

The times for the Quarantine import clearance process are in *Table 1*.

### **Next steps**

### It is recommended that:

- 1. The TRS Working Group should be directed to oversight delivery of tasks listed in the Action Plan below, in consultation with the various stakeholders; and
- **2.** The average release times identified in TRS 2019 be published on the Ministry of Finance website.

## **Action Plan**

No	. Activities	Reference to measure in the WTO TFA	Outputs (national and international instruments)	Parties responsible	Potential imple Short term	time fra ementat Medium term	ion	Comments
1	Paperless SAD by utilising ASYCUDA World	Article 10.1 Formalities	Streamline border procedures, reduce costs and time, and reduce paper documents.	Customs, NDQB, Customs Brokers Association	X Customs	X NDQB		Customs to implement by June 2020 NDQB to implement by December 2020
2	Simplify Green and Blue Lane process by ceasing presentation of hardcopy documents to CREP. Broker to present proof of payment to Exit Note Release point.		Reduce time for low risk cargo	Customs	Х			Customs to Implement by December 2019
3	Implement statistically valid random sample in Green and Blue Lane	Risk Management	Monitor the validity of green and blue lane	Customs	Х			Customs to implement by December 2019
4	Establish a working party to review and increase pre-arrival processing and monitor uptake	Pre-arrival processing	Streamline border procedures, reduce costs (reduces the likelihood of demurrage)	Customs, Customs Brokers, NDQB, Ships Agents	X			All parties to implement by October 2019 Baseline from TRS13% Target by July 2020 30% Monitoring: ASYCUDA

Time Release Study 2019 Page 14

No	Activities	Reference to measure in the WTO TFA	Outputs (national and international instruments)	Parties responsible	Potential imple Short term	time fra ementat Medium term	ion	Comments
5	Focussed risk-based targeting and profiling  Review effectiveness of criteria by Director of RM Unit Review accuracy of Inspection Act reporting by Director Operations  Weekly monitoring and dashboard report to DG and Directors from ASYCUDA  Develop statistically valid sampling regime with SOPs for officers  Implement Risk Management Technical Assistance (USAID)	Management	Increase effectiveness Reduce cost (of unnecessary inspection)	Customs (assisted by USAID)	X Reviews & Monitoring		X Technical Assistance	Review and monitoring by October 2019 Statistically valid sampling & procedures by July 2020 Risk Management Project as per current plan
6	Quarantine access and use of cargo manifest utilising ASYCUDA World		Reduce cost	Customs, NDQB	х			Customs & Quarantine to implement by July 2020 Establish Customs & NDQB Implementation Group
7	Quarantine use cargo manifest for risk targeting and profiling		Enhanced border risk targeting	NDQB			Х	Seek technical assistance to implement by December 2021

Time Release Study 2019 Page 15

No	. Activities	Reference to measure in the WTO TFA	Outputs (national and international instruments)		Potential time fra implementat Short Medium term term	ion	Comments
8	Collocation of Customs and NDQB  - SAD Document Screening personnel (until AW Paperless)  - Inspection staff for ease of joint inspections  - Enquiry point for trade information	1.3 Enquiry Point	Reduced cost for private sector to engage with agencies Reduce time		X	term	
9	Reduce the time for Quarantine inspections to commence - Review current process and present recommendations for implementation	10.1	Reduced cost	NDQB, Customs & Brokers Association	х		Implement by July 2020

Time Release Study 2019 Page 16

### Time Release Study - TRS 2019



ARRIVAL DETAILS [APORTIL]				
1. Ship Arrives at Anchor	day	mth -	hr	min
2. Ship at wharf	day	mth -	hr	min
3. Cargo/Container Offload Commences	day	mth -	hr	min
4. Offload Completed	day	mth -	hr	min
CUSTOMS REVENUE ENTRY PROCESSI	NG (CREP)			
5. Vessel Name & Voyage Number				
6. Broker name				
7. Importer name				
8. Container number/s				
CUSTOMS FRONT COUNTER FOR GREE	N/BLUE			
9. Broker registers SAD	day	mth -	hr	min
10. SAD Number				
11. Payment Date	day	mth -	hr	min
12. Broker submits SAD to CREP	day	mth -	hr	min
13. Send Copy 1/2 to Sea Port Office	day	mth -	hr	min
CUSTOMS FRONT OFFICE FOR RED/YE	LLOW			
14. Broker registers SAD	day	mth -	hr	min
15. SAD Number				
16. Broker submits SAD	day	mth -	hr	min
17. Re-route to Green	day	mth -	hr	min
18. Print Assessment Notice	day	mth -	hr	min
19. Issue Payment receipt	day	mth -	hr	min
20. Send Copy 1/2 to Sea Port Office	day	mth -	hr	min

SEA PORT OFFICE	
22. Record receipt of Copy 1/2 from CREP	day mth - hr min
23. Record receipt of Copy 2/2 from Broker/Importer	day mth - hr min
24. Send Copy 1/2 to X-ray section (GREEN)	day mth - hr min
25. Inspection required?	Yes No
26. Send Copy 1/2 to Inspection Office (RED)	day mth - hr min
27. Inspection commences	day mth - hr min
28. Inspection completed	day mth - hr min
29. Send Copy 1/2 to X-ray Section	day mth - hr min
30. Scan required?	Yes No
31. Issue Exit Note	day mth - hr min
32. Validate Exit Note/Container leaves port	day mth - hr min
QUARANTINE	JT.
33. Broker submits SAD	day mth - hr min
34. SAD Number	
35. Broker submit SAD to CREP	day mth - hr min
QUARANTINE ACTION	<u></u>
36. Receive original Manifest from Chief of Department	day mth - hr min
37. Inspection commences	day mth - hr min
38. Lab Examination	Yes No
39. Finish Time/Lab Examination	day mth - hr min
40. Inspection completed	day mth - hr min
41. Action	Destroy Re-Export PEQ
42. Comments	
43. Goods released	day mth - hr min

<sup>(\*) =</sup> Mandatory - if indicated for a **section**, mandatory questions for the section must be completed / if indicated for a **question**, the question must be completed if the section is used

# Appendix 2 - ASYCUDA World Timestamps/TRS Questionnaire 2019

Data Point	Data Description	Source /Status	Electronic	Purpose
Ref			System	
5	Vessel Name and Voyage	SAD	ASYCUDA	Verify
			World	
6	Broker Name	SAD	ASYCUDA	Verify
			World	
7	Importer Name	SAD	ASYCUDA	Verify
			World	
8	Container number	SAD	ASYCUDA	Verify
			World	
9	Broker registers SAD	1 <sup>st</sup> Registered in AW	ASYCUDA	Collect
			World	
12	Payment Date	Entered by Accounting	ASYCUDA	Collect
		Section show Payment	World	
		as status		
14	Broker registers SAD	Same as #9	ASYCUDA	Collect
			World	
17	Re-route to Green	Entered by CREP	ASYCUDA	Collect
			World	
18	Print Assessment Notice	AW automated	ASYCUDA	Collect
		following #17	World	
19	Issue Payment Receipt	Entered by Accounting	ASYCUDA	Collect
		Section show Payment	World	
		as status		
31	Issue Exit Note	Exit / Exited Status	ASYCUDA	Collect or
			World	Verify
32	Validate Exit	Totally Exited status	ASYCUDA	Collect or
	Note/Container leaves	records when last	World	Verify
	Port	container has exited		
		the Port		

# Appendix 3 - TRS Database Report (Ship arrives at Anchor to Validate Exit Note/Container leaves Port)

