

ASEAN Integrity and Ethics Blueprint

1. Aim

To develop an integrity management system in customs which ensures that all employees perform their duties in a fair, impartial, honest, trustworthy, polite and professional manner.

2. Strategic objectives

- Development and implementation of an integrity strategy for the customs organisation which specifies the professional and personal conduct and standards of service required of all employees, and which is fully endorsed, observed and supported by management.
- Creation of an organisational work environment that fosters positive employee attitudes and behaviours which contribute to achieving organisational objectives.
- Development and implementation of:
 - management and operational systems which eliminate or minimise opportunities for unethical behaviour;
 - recruitment systems which select new employees who match the 'ethics profile'¹ of the customs organisation;
 - a remuneration system which ensures a sufficient level of income to support a reasonable living standard and ethically correct behaviour;
 - a management control system which ensures that the integrity programmes or initiatives are applied in practice;
 - a code of conduct and system of internal sanctions for employee misconduct (a disciplinary system); and
 - client charters and related service standards.

3. Key indicators

Integrity strategy

- Top management acknowledges the importance of integrity, sets a personal example, and demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that the integrity policy is applied in practice.
- The integrity strategy incorporates the principles of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration and is in accordance with national legislation.
- The integrity strategy requires, as a minimum, that all employees observe the rule of law, and are honest, trustworthy, fair and impartial at all times.
- The integrity strategy stresses the importance of a client -orientated approach, while still meeting customs' obligation to all stakeholders.
- The integrity strategy encourages clients to accept an appropriate level of responsibility for the identification of integrity problems and implementation of

¹ Each AMS may wish to define its own "Ethics Profile" in more detail based on its own circumstances and environment, e.g. its mission, vision, and values.

practical solutions. This may be done through means such as Memorandum of Understanding between customs and clients, industry codes of conduct etc.

- A code of conduct/ethics² (or similar document) is developed and its observance is a mandatory condition of employment.
- The integrity strategy includes reference to a disciplinary code/system.

Information and training

- Every employee is provided with a copy of the code conduct/ethics, and acknowledges receipt and understanding of it.
- Every employee receives appropriate awareness training in the integrity programme.
- Customs laws, regulations, procedures and administrative guidelines as well as the customs code of conduct are made available to stakeholders and clients.

Management controls

- A programme of regular checks of both managers and staff is in place to ensure they carry out their duties in accordance with the code of conduct/ethics.
- Operational systems and procedures are organised in such a way as to minimise the risks for staff fraud or misconduct, including use of automated systems.
- An internal audit function is established, adequately empowered and operational.
- An internal staff investigation function is established, adequately empowered and operational.
- Procedures are in place to advise managers of risks discovered by an internal audit or staff investigation and of any required corrective actions.
- The performance appraisal system is used to provide an incentive for model behaviour by reinforcing the desired workforce characteristics and conduct.
- Procedures are in place to enable the mutual exchange of information between the courts, prosecuting agencies, other enforcement agencies and the customs administration about customs employees suspected of or convicted of criminal offences.
- Procedures are in place to enable the public or staff to provide information to the customs organisation about suspected fraud and misconduct by its employees.

Recruitment

- A merit based recruitment system that takes into account the characteristics of honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, and high standards of personal behaviour.
- The recruitment system checks the criminal records of applicants, with due respect for the principle of privacy; and persons with criminal records involving, for example, fraud, corruption or violence, are not recruited to the organisation.
- Customs salaries support a reasonable living standard.

² References to Customs Code of Conduct/ Ethics include any similar document such as a Government wide code of conduct etc.

Misconduct

- The disciplinary system (code) provides a process for the review and assessment of suspected misconduct by any employee.
- The disciplinary code provides for a range of internal sanctions — including dismissal — to be applied according to the nature and seriousness of the offence, and for criminal offences to be reported to the appropriate investigative agency, in accordance with national legislation.
- The disciplinary code requires any member of staff charged with a criminal offence to report the fact to the appropriate person or unit (e.g. Director General, Human Resources Office, or a disciplinary board), in accordance with national legislation.
- The disciplinary code provides for an appeals process in all cases of disciplinary action for alleged misconduct.
- Cases of serious misconduct which have been detected and dealt with, and the sanctions imposed, should be well publicised, once the appeal process is complete, (while respecting the anonymity of the individual concerned) to ensure staff are aware of the commitment of the organisation to deal with integrity issues.

Cross references: ASEAN Blueprints on Human Resource Development and Training & Development