

Editorial



An interesting development during the past 12 months has been the increasing importance placed by governments on international comparative reports, such as the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI). The LPI analyses the performance of over 150 countries in six key areas, one of which is the efficiency of customs and border management clearance, which examines the speed, simplicity, and predictability of formalities by border control agencies.

A number of Directors-General of Customs have told me that they have been summoned to meetings with their parliamentary masters, only to find themselves being praised or chastised, depending on the findings of such reports. As a result, stakeholders are seeking assurances about the validity and reliability of the reports, and I am pleased to note that the article by Motohiro Fujimitsu in this edition of the *World Customs Journal* comments on the relevance of comparative reports in the context of aid for trade facilitation. Hopefully further research will be forthcoming in this area of academic interest, with its potential to influence government decision making.

In other academic contributions, Chang-Ryung Han and Robert Ireland examine customs enforcement of informal funds transfer systems, Yuri V Malysenko analyses key aspects of customs control, Rob Preece provides a review of literature on the impact of excise taxation on government revenues and social objectives, and Parthasarathi Shome examines the role of Customs in international relations. Practitioner contributions to this edition include a noteworthy article by Lars Karlsson on the importance of leadership development in achieving successful capacity building outcomes, and Libing Wei's perspective on the impact of trade friction on customs performance.

The next edition of the Journal will focus on integrity and anti-corruption strategies relevant to the customs operating environment. This has always been an area of critical importance, and is again emerging as a topic of concern. The WCO's Revised Integrity Development Guide was discussed at the meeting of the Integrity Sub-Committee in January this year, and will be considered for adoption by the Policy Commission and Council in June. The Editorial Board would welcome contributions on this and other topics from both Customs and the international trading community.

Finally, I would like to welcome Professor Aydin Aliyev onto the Editorial Board. The Journal and its readership will benefit significantly from Professor Aliyev's impressive achievements in both public office and academia, and his high standing in the international customs community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'.

David Widdowson
Editor-in-Chief