

# V. INITIATIVES OF JAPAN CUSTOMS FOR PREVENTING SMUGGLING

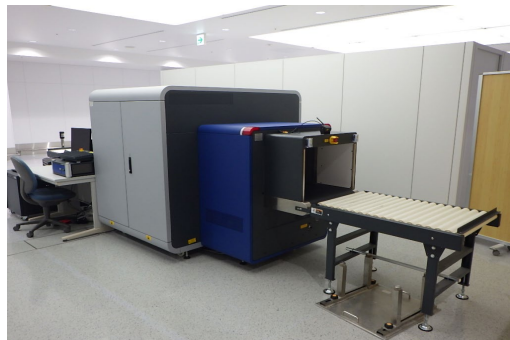
## 1. Effective Use of Control/Inspection Equipment and Advanced Technologies

### (1) X-ray inspection equipment

Customs has introduced various X-ray inspection equipment in order to inspect commercial cargo, passengers' personal effects, international mail, etc. being imported and exported more speedily and appropriately without opening them. Utilizing such X-ray inspection equipment effectively, Customs endeavors to find and seize smuggled methamphetamine, cannabis and other illicit drugs and firearms.

In consideration of the fact that large containers or containerized cargo are used for smuggling, large-scale X-ray inspection equipment has been introduced at 16 locations (13 ports) nationwide, since its first introduction in Yokohama Port in 2001. Previously, it took around 2 hours to bring out and inspect all cargo of one container, but thanks to the introduction of large-scale equipment, it became possible to complete an inspection of one container in around 10 minutes, and the time required for inspections was thus reduced significantly.

Recently, X-ray CT inspection equipment, with which the inside of cargo can be visualized in 3D X-ray CT images, are also being introduced and utilized. Furthermore, in order to cope with increasingly sophisticated smuggling tactics for illicit drugs, etc., Customs is working on study and research for achieving automatic detection of illicit drugs by the use of information obtained through X-ray CT inspection equipment and advanced technologies, such as AI.



## **(2) Support for examinations of X-ray inspection images by the use of AI**

The use of AI makes it possible to process and analyze a large volume of data, such as images and texts, at high speed, and is expected to sophisticate and improve the efficiency of customs services. Customs has developed and are utilizing AI that identifies the content of international mail based on X-ray inspection images.

## **(3) Customs' patrol boats**

Customs' patrol boats dispatched from customs offices surveil a wide area and crack down on smuggling at seaports or trade on the sea that uses fishing boats.



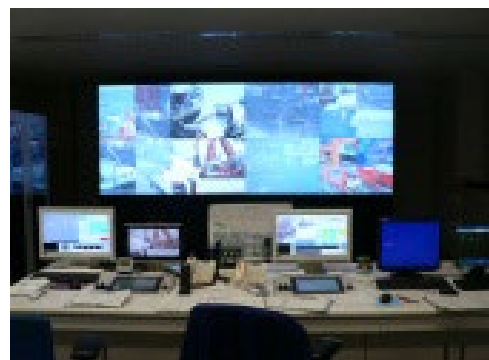
## **(4) Drug detector dogs**



The first 2 drug detector dogs were introduced with the cooperation of the US customs in 1979. At present, approx. 130 dogs are stationed at customs offices nationwide. They are mainly used for inspections of passengers' personal effects and international mail, etc. and have contributed to a number of seizures of cannabis, methamphetamine or other illicit drugs. In 2002, dogs to detect explosives and drugs were also introduced.

## **(5) Port monitoring camera systems**

Since March 1996, highly sensitive monitoring cameras with night vision have been introduced at major seaports to tighten surveillance of vessels, movement of goods, and persons at the port areas.



## (6) Metal detector gates

Metal detector gates were first introduced in 2017 as countermeasures against the smuggling of gold bullion, and have already been introduced at airports and ports nationwide. Compared with conventional hand-held metal detectors, metal detector gates enable stricter regulations through swift customs clearing targeting a larger number of passengers, without the need to stop the procedural flow.



## (7) Illicit drugs and explosives detector systems

Illicit drugs and explosives detector system (TDS; Trace Detection System) detects concealed methamphetamine, other illicit drugs, and explosives through the procedures of wiping the surface of commercial cargo, passengers' personal effects, and international mail, etc. being imported or exported, ionizing collected specimens, and analyzing their mass. The TDS has contributed to seizures of a large amount of methamphetamine and other illicit drugs. As the TDS enables detection of concealed illicit drugs and explosives in a short time without destroying inspection targets, swift and strict inspections have become possible.



## (8) Electronic Customs Declaration Gate System



As of April 2023, the Electronic Customs Declaration Gate System (e-Gate) is operating at Narita Airport, Haneda Airport, Kansai Airport, Chubu Airport, Fukuoka Airport, New Chitose Airport and Naha Airport. A passenger can complete the submission of "Declaration of Accompanied Articles and Unaccompanied Articles" by having an electronic declaration terminal scan the IC passport and the QR code created using "Visit Japan Web," and taking the customs entry procedures in accordance with the terminal's instructions. During this process, face photos are taken to verify identification with the photo in the IC passport. After completing the procedures at the terminal, the passenger is asked to go to the electronic declaration gate. The passenger may simply pass through the gate as face photos are taken once again for facial recognition.

(Please log in to the Visit Japan Web service from here!)



### **(9) Smart glasses**

Customs aims to develop a system for more efficient and effective examinations and inspections through having staff members remotely share information on a real-time basis by the use of smart glasses. For example, cargo inspectors conduct inspections while remotely collaborating with examiners and other staff with abundant expertise and experience.



### **(10) Utilization of digital forensics**

Digital forensics are techniques and procedures for analyzing electromagnetic records to prove crimes. Information collected from digital data of communication equipment that was used in a crime often serves as significant objective evidence for solving the crime. With further advancement of ICT in society and economy, such information and digital forensics are expected to become even more significant.

## **2. Customs Controls by Utilizing Information**

### **(1) Utilization of the information system**

The Customs Intelligence Database System (CIS)—a computerized system capable of sorting out and managing a wide variety of information, such as customs clearance for exports and imports as well as ship entries and departures—has been introduced at customs offices throughout the nation. Through the improvement and reinforcement of the system for intelligence analysis, processing, and management, intensive and efficient border control of smuggling is being carried out.

### **(2) Utilization of prior information**

For effective and efficient border control, enforcement activities actively utilizing prior information, such as passenger name records (information on passenger reservation and boarding procedures held by airline companies), are being conducted.

### **(3) Development of the Customs controls system**

Each customs office has the Customs Intelligence in charge of handling smuggling-related information with an appointed Customs Intelligence Manager. Additionally, the National Intelligence & Targeting Center, which conducts nationwide collection and analysis of information, was established and has been comprehensively managing and analyzing smuggling-related information received from domestic law enforcement authorities, such as the police and the Japan Coast Guard, as well as from foreign customs and other sources. In this manner, efforts have been made to reinforce the capacity to collect and analyze information.

In order to cope with organized and large-scale smuggling cases, the Criminal Investigation Center and the Customs Surveillance and Control Center were established. In close collaboration among these three Centers, efficient and effective enforcement activities have been conducted against cases involving two or more jurisdictions.

### **(4) Strengthened cooperation with various related organizations for better information collection**

Customs has concluded Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with various related organizations, aimed at ensuring greater cooperation in the prevention of smuggling.

Organizations with which the Customs and Tariff Bureau has concluded MOUs: 11 organizations

The Japanese Shipowners' Association; The Scheduled Airlines Association of Japan;  
Japan Air Cargo Forwarders Association; Japan Customs Brokers Association;  
Japan Foreign Steamship Association; Japan Fisheries Association;  
Japan Oceangoing Passenger Ship Association; All Nippon Hotel Association;  
Japan Ryokan & Hotel Association; All Japan Ryokan Hotel Association; and  
National Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations

### **(5) Enhancement of collection of information from the public**

Ongoing efforts to gather information from the public throughout the nation include the opening of a single toll-free telephone number accessible 24 hours a day from everywhere across the nation, the distribution of leaflets, and public relations activities such as those regarding law enforcement countermeasures at the border by using posters, the Japan Customs' website, and various social media services (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube).

[Leaflet]



[Poster]



\* In addition, materials for port-related organizations and fishery cooperatives, for logistics companies and warehouse companies, and for accommodation suppliers have been made and distributed.

[Customs YouTube Channel]



[Tekken× Japan Customs]



[Customs Twitter]



@Custom\_kun

[Customs Facebook]



@Japan.Customs

SMUGGLING - HOTLINE  
(24 hours a day: toll-free)

**0 1 2 0 - 4 6 1 - 9 6 1**

(Call Customs, Ministry of Finance, for information on smuggling.)

Customs website  
<https://www.customs.go.jp/english/index.htm>



Webpage for information provision  
[https://www.customs.go.jp/english/quest/smuggling\\_e.htm](https://www.customs.go.jp/english/quest/smuggling_e.htm)



### 3. Closer Cooperation with Relevant Agencies

#### (1) Border controls through cooperation with relevant agencies

With the aim of imposing effective controls at the border, Customs, police, Coast Guard, and other relevant organizations are conducting joint training and joint operations in close cooperation, while each makes full use of their own information, equipment, jurisdiction, and experience.



#### (2) Holding of Law Enforcement Meeting on Measures against Smuggling

The Customs and Tariff Bureau of the Ministry of Finance organizes the Law Enforcement Meeting on Measures against Smuggling with the aim of strengthening cooperation with the ministries and agencies concerned and promoting the exchange of information needed to interdict smuggling cases. Thus, information exchange is being promoted at the national level. Regional customs offices also organize regional law enforcement meetings on smuggling with the law enforcement authorities concerned to promote information exchange at the regional level.



## 4. Promotion of International Information Exchange

### (1) Promotion of information exchange with foreign customs administrations

As the single contact point of Japan Customs for information exchange with foreign customs administrations, the International Intelligence Office was established in the National Intelligence & Targeting Center. Japan Customs has been continuing its efforts to promote the establishment of an international framework of customs cooperation with foreign countries, such as Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (hereinafter referred to as "CMAAs"), which include provisions for information exchange concerning the smuggling of illicit goods (e.g. illicit drugs) (See "Present Status of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements, etc.").

Utilizing international networks, including the ones managed by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) for Asia and the Pacific, Japan Customs exchanges smuggling-related information and intelligence with foreign customs administrations and other law enforcement authorities.

(Reference) RILO (Regional Intelligence Liaison Office)

The RILO is the base for the WCO regional projects, which was established for the purpose of promoting information exchange on illicit drugs among customs administrations in the region and improving the intelligence analysis on the trends of smuggling in the region. The RILO for Asia and the Pacific, in which Japan Customs has a membership, was established as the first RILO of the world in December 1987. Japan Customs hosted the RILO for Asia and the Pacific (located in Tokyo Customs) for the five years from January 1999 and has continued active participation in the RILO project with many contributions. The RILO for Asia and the Pacific, whose office has been in South Korea since January 2012, analyzes trends in smuggling within the region based on reports from participant countries and regions on interdicted cases of smuggling of illicit drugs and related objects, distributes the results to participating countries and other organizations, and facilitates the information exchange among participating customs administrations. The office of the RILO for Asia and the Pacific will be established again in Japan in January 2024. It is expected that the information-gathering network will be further strengthened as an information hub among relevant countries and regions.

### (2) Information exchange under CMAAs

Japan Customs is actively working toward new CMAAs in order to facilitate information exchange with the source or transit countries of illicit drugs and firearms, and is also committed to further promoting information exchange through the existing CMAAs.

(Reference) Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements

A Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement is an international agreement that includes the provision of the mutual assistance by the customs authorities of the Contracting Parties for the prevention of smuggling of goods harmful to society and strict border control against goods infringing intellectual property rights, and also provides for cooperation in simplification and harmonization of customs procedures.

### (3) Collecting smuggling-related information through the dispatch of officers

Customs officers are sent to the countries and regions that are likely to be sources for illicit drugs, etc. smuggled into Japan to collect information on smuggling. In addition, efforts are being made to establish mutual cooperative relations with the foreign customs administrations. Japan Customs also dispatches officers specialized in intelligence analysis to the countries and regions which are tackling offenses related to illicit drugs smuggling to exchange views on the analysis of intelligence on source countries of smuggling, etc.



#### (4) Participation in international conferences

Japan Customs is actively taking part in international conferences (including online participation), such as the Enforcement Committee of the WCO, WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Contact Points Meeting, and the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to exchange opinions and information on control of illicit drugs with various countries.



#### Present Status of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements, etc. (As of February 2023)

<p>Enforcing or signed (39 countries and regions)<sup>(Note1)</sup></p>	<p>&lt; Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAAs) &gt;            U.S.A. (Jun. 1997), Republic of Korea (Dec. 2004), China (Apr. 2006), EU (Feb. 2008), Russia (May 2009), the Netherlands (Mar. 2010), Italy (Apr. 2012), South Africa (Jul. 2012), Germany (Dec. 2014), Spain (May 2015), <u>Norway (Sept. 2016)</u>, <u>Mexico (Jul. 2018)</u>, <u>Uzbekistan (Dec. 2019)</u>, <u>U.K. (Jan. 2021)</u>, <u>Iran (Aug. 2021, signed)</u>, <u>Brazil (Sept. 2021)</u>, <u>Uruguay (Oct. 2021)</u>, and <u>Moldova (Jun. 2022)</u>,</p> <p>&lt; EPAs<sup>(Note 2)</sup> &gt;            Singapore (Nov. 2002), Malaysia (Jul. 2006), Thailand (Nov. 2007), Indonesia (Jul. 2008), Brunei Darussalam (Jul. 2008), the Philippines (Dec. 2008), Switzerland (Sept. 2009), Vietnam (Oct. 2009), India (Aug. 2011), Peru (Mar. 2012), <u>Australia (Jan. 2015)</u>, Mongolia (Jun. 2016), and TPP11<sup>(*)</sup> (Mar. 2018, signed)  <sup>*(Note 4)</sup> TPP11(CPTPP) participants: <u>Mexico</u>, <u>Singapore</u>, <u>New Zealand</u>, <u>Canada</u>, <u>Australia</u>, <u>Vietnam</u>, <u>Peru</u>, <u>Chile</u>, <u>Malaysia</u>, and Brunei Darussalam</p> <p>&lt; Administrative Arrangements &gt;  <u>Australia (Jun. 2003; Jul. 2017, revised)</u>, <u>New Zealand (Apr. 2004; Jun. 2014, revised)</u>, <u>Canada (Jun. 2005)</u>, <u>Hong Kong; China (Jan. 2008)</u>, <u>Macau; China (Sept. 2008)</u>, <u>France (Jun. 2012)</u>, <u>U.K. (Jun. 2013)</u>, <u>Belgium (Jul. 2017)</u>, and <u>Austria (May 2019)</u></p> <p>&lt; Others &gt;            Chinese Taipei (Nov. 2017)<sup>*(Note 5)</sup></p>
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(Note 1) A country with which Japan has concluded multiple frameworks in different formats is counted as one. (ex. with Australia, Japan has concluded an EPA, TPP and administrative arrangement.)

(Note 2) EPAs listed here are those incorporating provisions concerning customs mutual assistance.

(Note 3) Those underlined incorporate the content of the amendment of the Customs Act in FY2012 for the purpose of enhancing information exchange with foreign customs administrations.

(Note 4) TPP11 (CPTPP) was signed by 11 countries in March 2018. Countries with a dotted underline are those which have reported the completion of their procedures under domestic laws to New Zealand, the Depository of the Agreement, and for which the agreement has become effective.

(Note 5) Regarding Chinese Taipei, a private sector arrangement signed between the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association.

#### (5) Technical cooperation for enhancing border control capacity

In order to ensure a safe and secure society in Japan through enhancing the border control capacity of the customs administration of developing countries, such as by strengthening their capabilities for collecting and analyzing information on smuggling of illicit drugs and firearms, Japan Customs has been dedicated to technical cooperation to extend Japan's expertise and technologies in this field.