



Updating Jordan's Customs Administration

Challenge

When Jordan joined the World Trade Organization in 2000, updating its customs administration to meet requirements became a top priority. Outdated clearance procedures often delayed routine shipments at borders for weeks and weak transit controls made the borders vulnerable to illegal goods shipments. Jordan needed a more efficient, market-oriented customs program capable of handling increased border traffic while at the same time preventing the entry of pirated goods.



Photo: Jordan Customs Department

Jordanian customs officers inspect a truck at the Jordan-Iraq border.

Results

Jordanian customs has become a more modern, trade-friendly system, thanks to reforms that have significantly sped up processing. For more than three-quarters of shipments, the wait time to clear customs at entry points has been reduced from 2.1 days to 24 hours or less—even as the amount of shipments rose 37 percent. Reforms have also helped the country improve intellectual property protection by helping customs more accurately identify shipments that are likely to contain counterfeit goods. Jordan's rapid and efficient implementation of the ASYCUDA system was recognized by the United Nations as exemplary and today Jordanian customs officers train neighboring countries on the system. The improvements in customs processing have helped to attract investors, protect legitimate businesses and increase national revenues.

Initiative

USAID provided extensive assistance to Jordan's Department of Customs to overhaul its operations. Legal advisors reviewed the national customs code and helped draft amendments to bring it into compliance with World Trade Organization requirements. To improve the department's ability to process goods that cross Jordan's borders, USAID provided support and equipment to install the ASYCUDA system—the most widely used automated customs management program in the world. Customs officers were trained in the new procedures and traveled to the United States in September 2000 on a study tour. Using what was learned on the officers' visit, Jordan adopted a strategy for further reform based on the U.S. model.

“Jordan is now considered a pioneer in customs automation in many ways. USAID... didn't just provide equipment—they were one of our main partners in the process.”

*—Marwan Gharaibeh,
Director of Planning,
Department of Customs*

