

Unique Consignment Reference System (UCR) in Ghana

Collaboration between Ghana Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS)
and the Ghana Community Network Services Ltd. (GCNet) 2010

Introduction

The adoption of the Unique Consignment Reference (UCR) concept by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) was driven by the need for Customs Organisations to facilitate legitimate international trade while at the same time strengthening effective audit based controls.

The UCR has been likened to "an electronic staple designed for e-commerce" that binds together all data concerning a trade transaction, "from initial order and consignment of goods by a supplier, to the movement of those goods and arrival at the border, through to their final delivery to the importer".

CEPS intends to once again pioneer customs automation and modernisation in Africa by introducing the UCR into Ghana.

The screenshot displays the Ghana Customs Management System (GCMS) interface. The window title is "Ghana Customs Management System". The menu bar includes "Action", "Edit", "Query", "Block", "Record", "Field", "Help", and "Window". The toolbar contains various icons for navigation and actions. The main window shows a form for "View UCR Details" with the following data:

UCR No	KGHCEPSUCR0900000041	LOV	UCR CMS Ref	20091013000003	Date Sent	13/10/2009 09:26:01		
Regime Code	IM	IMPORT	Sender Mailbox	EMDA051	Intchg. Ref.	09101309262009	Date Recv.	13/10/2009 09:26:46

The form is divided into two main sections: "Importer Detail" and "Exporter Detail".

Importer Detail		Exporter Detail	
Code	814M000203	Code	NA
Name	TOP INDUSTRIES LIMITED	Name	QATAR CHEMICAL COMPANY LTD
Designation	GEORGE AGBENYAH	Designation	MD
Address	NORTH KANESHIE INDUSTRIAL AREA	Address	P.O.BOX 24646 DOHA,
Country	GH GHANA	Country	QA QATAR
Tel./Fax No.	0243229326	Tel/Fax No.	3233030300
Contact No.	0243229326	Contact No.	3233030300
Contact Person	TOP INDUSTRIES LIMITED	Contact Person	SYRUS BELGIUM

Below the importer and exporter details, the "Goods Desc." is "HHM TR 144 MARLEX HDPE FILM GRANULES". The "City Of Origin" is "QA QATAR" and the "City Of Dest." is "GH GHANA". The "Trans. Mode" is "3 BY SEA" and the "Status" is "A ACTIVE".

The bottom section of the form is titled "RELATIONS" and "ATTACHED DOCUMENTS". It contains a table with the following columns: "Old UCR No.", "Activity Type", and "Activity Description".

Old UCR No.	Activity Type	Activity Description
KGHCEPSUCR0900000039	C	AMEND

A typical GCMS declaration bearing a UCR number

Benefits of UCR

Frequently data exchange between the organisations involved in a trade transaction founders because each organisation utilises its own reference scheme to identify the same transaction. The UCR will provide a transaction identifier that will be understood by all organisations involved in processing the trade transaction:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| · CEPS | · Banks |
| · Importer | · Exporter |
| · Declarant | · Shipping Agents |
| · Destination Inspection Company | · MDAs |
| · Other Customs Organisations | · Etc. |

This will provide a powerful tool to enable collaboration in data exchange between organisations operating both within and outside of Ghana. The UCR will also facilitate document tracking by Importers, clearing agents etc giving them a single search key to track the status of all their electronic trade documents. Use within CEPS will mainly be confined to Post-Event / Audit type processes where the matching of various supporting documents will be greatly facilitated.

Progress to date

CEPS has become the accredited National Issuing Agency for Ghana in accordance with ISO/IEC 15459. The format of the Ghana UCR is as follows:

KGHCEPSUCRyyynnnnnnn

Where:

K	Indicates issuer is a National Issuing Agency
GH	Indicates Ghana
CEPS	Indicates issuance for CEPS own purposes
UCR	Indicates purpose is UCR
yy	Indicates year of issuance
nnnnnnnn	Is a sequential number

NOTE!!! The UCR will contain simple information about the two parties involved in the transaction and some basic 'Header Level' information:

- Exporter's TIN. Name, Address, Telephone No
- Importer's TIN. Name, Address, Telephone No
- General Goods Description
- Country of Consignment
- Country of Destination
- Means of Transport

Declarants and Importers will be able to submit UCR creation requests from their new browser based Front End Systems; their requests will be automatically validated prior to UCR generation. Copies of the UCR will be sent to the following locations:

1. è GCMS UCR Module
2. è Declarants Front End System
3. è To specified email addresses

Once issued the UCR will be referenced in all other trade related documentation, such as:

- **Suppliers Order**
- **Invoice**
- **IDF**
- **FCVR**
- **AWB / BL**
- **Customs Declaration**
- **All MDA Permits and Exemptions**

Note!!!

It is intended that the referencing of a valid UCR will become a requirement for all electronic documents submitted to Ghana Customs Management System (GCMS).

Project Implementation

CEPS intends to adopt a phased approach to the implementation of the UCR as described below:

Phase 1

From 1st January 2010 - the mandatory use of UCR for all commercial transactions entering or leaving Ghana will commence.

Stakeholders will be expected to reference the UCR in the following documentation:

1. Import Declaration Form (issued by Ministry of Trade and Industry)
2. Customs Bill of Entry
3. Final Classification and Valuation Report (issued by Destination Inspection Companies)
4. Ghana Standards Board Inspection Reports
5. Food and Drug Board Permits
6. Environmental Protection Agency Permits
7. Timber Industry Development Division Permits
8. Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Permits
9. Veterinary Services Department Permits
10. Ghana Free Zones Board Exemptions
11. Minerals Commission Exemptions
12. Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Exemptions

Phase 2

From 1st July 2010 mandatory use of UCR for all commercial transactions entering or leaving Ghana. Stakeholders will be expected to reference the UCR in the following additional documents:

1. Air Waybill / Bill of Lading
2. Invoices
3. Packing List

Phase 3

From 1st January 2011 CEPS will aim to include the UCR in data exchange with the Customs authorities of neighbouring countries.

CEPS intends to commence with a UCR pilot project on a selective basis in the last quarter of 2009 and will provide the WCO with further updates as the implementation progresses.

Remember!!!

The introduction of the UCR system is to facilitate trade and ensure the integrity of revenue mobilization. Comply with all requirements to make import and export transactions easy and beneficial.

For further information, please contact:

→ www.gcnet.com.gh

→ The Assistant Commissioner, IT, CEPS Headquarters - 021-665115