



# CAPTAC-DR



Interview with Dr. Dante Mossi,  
Executive Chairman of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration  
(CABEI). P. 01, 02.

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# CABEI SUPPORTS PHASE III OF CAPTAC-DR

*Interview with Dr. Dante Mossi  
Executive Chairman  
Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)*

In July 2019, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) announced its incorporation as a financial partner to the IMF's Technical Assistance Center for Central America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic (CAPTAC-DR), in its new five-year cycle or Phase III. CABEI provides US\$2.5 million and its extensive financial and technical experience, and together with other financial partners of the Center and the IMF, strengthen the institutional capacity of the member countries on the design and implementation of macroeconomic and financial policies, in addition to contributing to advance in regional integration.

Dr. Dante Mossi, Executive Chairman of CABEI, shares the motivation for the financial support to the Center and explains how the Center's activities complement CABEI's Institutional Strategy, and describe their expectations for capacity development in the region.



## **1. WHAT WAS CABEI'S MOTIVATION TO JOIN AS A FINANCIAL PARTNER OF CAPTAC-DR ON ITS THIRD OPERATING PHASE?**

The Bank has been a strategic partner of CAPTAC-DR since the Center began operations in July 2009, and a financial partner during its first 5 years of operation. For the Bank, the region will achieve its objectives in the development of the capacities described in CAPTAC-DR Programmatic Document for the period 2019-24. The support that CAPTAC-DR provides in the areas of public finance, financial sector, and statistics to public entities within the region is undoubtedly crucial. These countries may strengthen their institutional capacity and macroeconomic and financial policy frameworks, while they move forward to a robust regional integration process. Therefore, the Bank continues to support the work of CAPTAC-DR.

CABEI Institutional Strategy for the coming years aims to promote the sustainable development of its member countries

through strategic considerations, including regional integration as a critical element of its *raison d'être* and environmental protection. As discussed last September with CAPTAC-DR Coordinator, Dr. Mario Garza, during CABEI Board of Governors in Mexico, the work of the Center offers an excellent opportunity to complement the Bank's agenda and support our strategic goals with the region. All this is consistent with our vision of creating better conditions of stability, economic growth, and social development in these countries.

CAPTAC-DR also offers an excellent platform to collaborate and achieve synergies with other partners contributing to this initiative like Spain, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, and the European Union, who have development agendas for the region that complement the tasks and objectives from the Bank. We will undoubtedly achieve better results by aligning our efforts than those obtained if the agendas, including that of the CABEI, are developed individually.

## **2. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THE EMPHASIS THAT CAPTAC-DR PUTS ON DEVELOPING CAPACITIES FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH POLICIES?**

CAPTAC-DR member countries face the challenge of raising their potential growth and reducing their social gaps. Therefore, the emphasis that the Center makes in building capacities to develop policies that address gender equity, reduce income inequality among families, protect the environment, and fight corruption is adequate. This emphasis is also consistent with CABEL's mission of promoting social development in the region. In this regard, I consider that CAPTAC-DR's growing collaboration with other technical assistance providers and the more significant leadership of the regional councils in integrating these new areas to a macroeconomic policy are appropriate.

From this perspective, the initial agenda that CAPTAC-DR is developing together with the regional authorities for Phase III seems very pertinent. For example, recent regional seminars on policies for inclusive growth, financial inclusion, and natural resource analysis in national accounts offer strategies and disseminate state-of-the-art standards among officials in the region. Also, bilateral technical assistance in gender-equity-oriented budgeting and future missions to improve statistics on income gaps and gender are the initial steps to develop capacities in these new focal areas.

## **3. HOW DOES CAPTAC-DR CONTRIBUTE TO CABEL'S OBJECTIVE OF RISING THE REGION'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS?**

International experience suggests that countries with higher levels of competitiveness achieve higher growth rates and are more attractive to investment and job creation. Also, improvements in competitiveness are associated with improvements in institutions, infrastructure, education, health, and governance, among other factors. In this regard, I think that CAPTAC-DR contributes to competitiveness in the region through the strengthening of macroeconomic institutions, including processes and methodologies in policymaking. An example of this is the development of customs capabilities that facilitate trade by simplifying border management and expediting the movement of goods through the region and, at the same time, combat smuggling and reducing tax evasion; or the modernization of national budgets for more efficient allocation of resources from taxes, or in the processes of transparency and fiscal governance, among others.

## **4. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE EMPHASIS THAT CAPTAC-DR GIVES TO REGIONAL PROJECTS IN PHASE III?**

My opinion is very positive, as it contributes to the process of regional integration, which as I have already mentioned, is essential for the Bank by providing an additional source of economic growth to the region. It emphasizes the leadership of the Council of Treasury or Finance Ministers of Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic (COSEFIN), the Central American Monetary Council (CAMC) and of the Central American Council of Banking Supervisors, Insurance Companies and Other Financial Institutions (CCSBSO) in defining priorities for the region. Regional projects such as integrated customs risk management, the harmonization of government finance statistics and the supervision of corporate governance in regional banks, among others, are examples of standardization and best practices to facilitate the coordination of macroeconomic policies and support regional integration, in coordination with regional institutions such as SICA and SIECA.

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD THE REGION ADOPT TO EXPEDITE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MACROECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS?**

I think that the economic authorities in each country are well committed to the goals set for the next 5 years. Frequent evaluation of the work plan agreed with CAPTAC-DR, management of the results obtained by the countries, and the support of financial partners are the ingredients of success. However, I would invite the authorities and CAPTAC-DR to shield the development from political influences, reduce the excessive employee turnover, and provide more opportunities for specialized training as the means to achieve sustainable development. The incorporation of digitalization, logistics innovation, more transparency, and better analysis in macroeconomic tasks are also essential. CAPTAC-DR could develop a roadmap for the region to close the development gaps of the countries' policy frameworks regarding those of the most developed countries in Latin America. I finish by expressing that CABEL is in the best disposition to continue supporting the region and CAPTAC-DR in the development of macroeconomic institutions.



# MODERNIZING THE ECONOMY MEASUREMENT

*A talk by Andrés Navas, Economist of CAPTAC-DR,  
with Mario Garza, Coordinator of CAPTAC-DR,  
and Martha Tovar, Expert on Statistics of  
CAPTAC-DR*

Andrés Navas: Since its inception in 2009, the IMF's Technical Assistance Center for Central America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic (CAPTAC-DR) has contributed to the modernization of macroeconomic statistics of the region. It results from the need to better inform decision-makers regarding the economic policy and improve people's understanding of how fast the economy is growing, where investment opportunities are, how risks evolve, or the level of household income inequality.

Currently, the countries of the region are taking more comprehensive steps to improve the measurement of their economies. Because of their relevance, I would like to talk about the advances made in macroeconomic statistics, the benefits of having modern statistics, and the challenges that countries face. Thanks to Mario Garza and Martha Tovar for giving this talk that is very useful and interesting for our readers. I would start by asking Mario:

**Andrés Navas**



**Dr. Mario Garza**



**Martha Tovar**



## **HOW STRONG ARE ECONOMIC MEASUREMENT METHODS WITHIN THE REGION?**

Mario Garza: Thanks, Andrés. I am happy to discuss this important matter. Undoubtedly, the region of Central America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic (CAPDR), with the support of IMF and CAPTAC-DR, has raised the quality of its macroeconomic statistics. Although there is still work to be done, I would cite three significant accomplishments in the last 10 to 15 years:

First, the harmonization of monetary and financial statistics among the seven countries in the region. As you know, this allows for an analysis of the monetary aggregates and bank deposit structure, as well as the credit level to the private sector and the liquidity and capital position of the banking system. In summary, it facilitates the monitoring of financial intermediation in general and allows comparison among countries in the region. Second, the

harmonization of foreign accounts, which improved the measurement of exports, imports, and services such as tourism and the maquila, allowing a better analysis of foreign trade and its regional comparison. Thirdly, the progress in the dissemination of monthly statistics for the economic activity, the external sector, and prices. Although in some cases, the publication of these statistics should be timelier, I think that the region, with the support of the Center, will succeed in the price measurement area in the coming years. Thus, the economic authorities and investors now have not only a better measurement of their national economy, but it is also comparable to that of other countries in the region and the world. Furthermore, the CAPDR region is currently modernizing its national accounts based on rebasing and the harmonization or integration of statistics in all sectors of the economy, such as the real, external, monetary and public finance sectors, in a national accounting system consistent with international best practices.



**ANDRÉS NAVAS: YOU HAVE HIGHLIGHTED ON THE STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF THE REGION, BUT WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING HIGH QUALITY MACROECONOMIC STATISTICS?**

Mario Garza: Having a reliable measurement of economic activity and its sectoral structure is important. It is like having 20/20 vision to observe and analyze the economic picture. With more accurate information, the macroeconomic authorities can adopt adequate policies to preserve the stability and promote economic growth. They can also better respond to external shocks to protect employment or design strategies that mitigate the household income gap. Companies will also be in a better position to make timely investments and employment decisions in a more attractive economic sector.

It will also be possible to observe more precisely the change in the structure of the economy occurring over the years. For example, the transition from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector, and subsequently to the technology services sector, as currently occurs in the region. Moreover, the adoption of international standards in the development of statistics allows more robust comparisons with other regions of the world. On the other hand, I would like to add that outdated statistics can strongly skew the measurement of a country's economic activity. As you may remember, the Central Bank of El Salvador reported that the revision of its national accounts to the base year 2005 led to an average reduction of 14 percent in the historical calculation of gross domestic product. Therefore, it is vital to invest in statistics to have a quality measurement for the economy.

**ANDRÉS NAVAS: I WOULD LIKE MARTHA TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE BASE YEAR IS AND WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR REBASING.**

Martha Tovar: Thanks, Andrés. The base year is a benchmark that serves to measure the performance of the economy over a while, and the more updated it is, the more accurate the structural economic capture. Thus, best practices suggest that the base year is updated periodically and that it should not be more than 5 to 10 years old.

In the case of the CAPDR region, there are five critical steps in updating the base year. First, statistical institutes and central banks carry out the strategic plan under international methodological standards in which the actions, the cost of updating, and the economic agents involved are defined. Second, the classification of economic activities is updated by type of product and expense, and basic statistics are collected through censuses and business and household surveys. Third, the base year is then selected, and the economy and its composition are measured toward that new benchmark. Fourth, the historical series of annual and short-term national accounts are updated. Finally, the new national accounts are disseminated to the general public.

Rebasing requires the modernization of national accounts. Hence, all the benefits associated with high-quality statistics that Mario explained are the result of the modernization of national accounts. The clearer the picture, the best the economic outlook.

**ANDRÉS NAVAS: THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION ARE REBASING. OUR READERS AND I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE MODERNIZATION PROCESS.**

Martha Tovar: We have made progress. So much progress that in the next two years the current round of updating of national accounts will conclude. Hence, the base year in 6 of the 7 countries of the region will be 3 to 8 years old, quite in line with international best practices. To give you an idea, in 2018, the base year in the region was, on average, 14 years, and therefore, it is an extraordinary advance. There are several elements behind this success. Countries are gradually adopting the standards of the System of National Account 2008 and have strengthened the institutions responsible for generating statistics. Similarly, they have invested in the compilation of basic statistics and developed employment matrices to measure and incorporate the activity of the informal sector, for example. Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Panama will also have new base years, between 2016 and 2018.

I see this modernization process with optimism, as it teaches relevant lessons and good practices to continue improving economic measurement in the region. CAPTAC-DR technical assistance has contributed to achieving this progress. Now, in terms of the timetable, Guatemala will publish in a few months the results of its new base year 2013, while El Salvador is developing a strategic plan to upgrade their base year 2005.

**ANDRÉS NAVAS: THANKS MARTHA AND MARIO FOR THIS INTERVIEW. IT HAS BEEN ENLIGHTENING. I WILL CONCLUDE BY ASKING, WHICH IS THE MAIN LESSON LEARNED IN THE REGION?**

Martha Tovar: For statistics to better inform policy decisions and include the analysis of investors and the rest of the economic agents, I think that it is essential to see that statistics institutes in the region are aimed to have greater independence and resources. It will help them lead the high-quality process in statistics, as in the most developed countries in Latin America. Also, synergies and collaboration between statistical institutes, central banks, ministries, and other relevant agencies should be further institutionalized. Technology and digitalization should also be integrated into the compilation of statistics to extend their coverage to hitherto "not measurable" sectors, producing them at a lower cost and disseminating them promptly.

Mario Garza: Adding to what Martha said, a lesson from experience in the region is that statistics should be useful and available to users. More accurate statistics are needed to design policies consistent with the goals of sustainable development and inclusive growth. For example, they should measure income gaps between families, gender, and financial inclusion. The measurement of the economy must also include the use of natural resources and the decay of the environment. Public finance statistics could also evolve to information transparency and fiscal governance policies better. As you can see, the challenges ahead are important, and it is essential to explain the benefits of having updated and high-quality statistics to have the people's support and continue investing in improving the measurement of the economy. CAPTAC-DR continues to support the region to overcome any remaining challenges.



# PUBLIC FINANCE STATISTICS

## **REGIONAL HARMONIZATION OF PUBLIC FINANCE STATISTICS**

This quarter, the countries continued to prepare databases for the first regional publication of harmonized statistics on public finance of the public sector debt scheduled for late 2019. Also, the Public Finance Statistics Working Group (GTEFP) aims to prepare the first regional analysis reports, which would be disseminated in the first half of 2020. On September 10 and 11, COSEFIN and the CMCA Secretariats and the Center, with the support of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, held in Santo Domingo the first meeting of the four working groups of harmonized statistics (public finance, national accounts, monetary and financial, and external sector). This action is essential for greater consistency of data for decision-making and proper governance. On the same occasion, the third meeting of the GTEFP, which was established as a technical support agency specialized in government finance statistics (GFS) and public sector debt statistics (PSDS) for the regional harmonization process, was held. The Committee has the technical support of the Council of Treasury or Finance Ministers of Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic (COSEFIN), and the Central American Monetary Council (CMCA).

## **PROGRESS IN PUBLIC SECTOR FISCAL AND DEBT STATISTICS**

During this quarter, three technical assistance missions were carried out to the countries of the region. In the Dominican Republic, we have worked with the authorities to close the databases for the future publication of GFS, incorporating decentralized statistics and social security. CAPTAC-DR Expert also participated in a meeting of the country's Finance Statistics Advisory Committee to focus on the importance of data consistency.

In Honduras, basic GFS training was provided to 42 SEFIN participants on the future alignment of the budget classification regarding the statistical classification to improve the information provided for the economic analysis, and progress has been made in expanding the coverage of the data. In Guatemala, work plans and the newly compiled databases from decentralized statistics were reviewed for the future publication of fiscal data. In all cases, the compilation of expenses according to government operations was focused on social expenditure and environmental protection.

## **REMOTE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE COUNTRIES**

Remote communication technologies are actively used in the technical assistance provided to the countries of the region for the development of GPF, especially with the authorities of the Dominican Republic, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama. That modality is also used by the CAPTAC-DR's GFS Resident Expert and SECOSEFIN and SECMCA teams for the regional harmonization process issues. That process is expected to be widespread, even with other countries and institutions.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MISSIONS AND REGIONAL PROGRESS EXPECTED FOR THE NEXT QUARTER**

Technical assistance missions to El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica are scheduled for the quarter between November 2019 and January 2020. These missions are focused on increasing the coverage in fiscal and debt data, producing monthly or quarterly data, and improving the consistency between the data published by the ministries of finance and central banks. Significant progress is expected regarding the regional harmonization process: (a) the first publication of a regional harmonized database for fiscal and public debt data; and (b) development of the first regional comparative report between countries. The fourth meeting of the Public Finance Statistics Working Group (GTEFP) is set for March 2020.







# TAX ADMINISTRATION

## CAPTAC-DR SUPPORTS THE DGII OF EL SALVADOR IN STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC PLANNING

The new vision of the Directorate General of Internal Revenue of El Salvador requires a strategic plan aligned with the objectives of the current management.

***DGII Senior executives meet to define the main guidelines of the strategic plan and actions for compliance.***

The new DGII management needs to ensure that its strategic planning is aligned to the Cuscatlán Plan, which is the country's fiscal plan. This work consisted of the revision of DGII's mission and vision, so the institution ensures the tax revenues that El Salvador needs, through the implementation of an equitable tax system, facilitating voluntary compliance and fighting avoidance and tax evasion.

In this scenario, DGII's senior executives, with the support of CAPTAC-DR, held a meeting in San Salvador, on August 7-9, to exhaustively and exclusively identify the guidelines of the tax administration, define policies, and set strategic objectives.

To be more efficient and ensure the achievement of their objectives, tax administrations require management tools that allow them, under a structured process, to plan their actions and monitor progress in achieving their goals. CAPTAC-DR has accompanied the tax administrations of the region and supports them in the evaluation and development of their strategic planning according to international best practices.





# CAPTAC-DR PARTICIPATES IN “JUAN HERNÁNDEZ BATISTA” INTERNATIONAL TAX SEMINAR

- This event organized by the Directorate General of Internal Revenue (DGII) with the collaboration of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Inter-American Tax Administrations (Centro Interamericano de Administraciones Tributarias, CIAT), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and CAPTAC-DR in Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic, mainly discussed the new challenges of tax administrations.

This seminar organized by DGII in memory of its former director, Mr. Juan Hernández Batista, and was attended by senior officials of the Dominican Republic DGII and tax administrations in the region.

The event was held on August 27-28 and addressed different issues related to the new challenges of tax administrations. Among the topics discussed were several issues on digital taxation and its effects on the VAT and income tax. Experts from the IDB, CIAT, and OECD led these discussions.

The Director-General of the Internal Revenue Service of Chile presented the tax compliance management model based on risk management. Also, the Director-General of the Federal Administration of Public Revenues (AFIP) gave a presentation on the reduction of VAT gap through systemic and massive controls, and the Director of the Department of Financial and Tax Inspection of the State Tax Administration Agency (AEAT) gave a presentation on the selection of cases and the impact on the problems of non-compliance.

The second day of the event focused on information as a tax control mechanism, an issue that was addressed by CAPTAC-DR's tax administration expert, who spoke about the importance of the use of information for the tax control process. Also, the representative of the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department presented the results of the study conducted by the IMF and CAPTAC-DR on the use of third-party information in the countries of the region.



# FINANCIAL SUPERVISION

## FINANCIAL SUPERVISION CAPTAC-DR PARTICIPATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON FINANCIAL SUPERVISION AND REGULATORY ISSUES WITH THE SUPERVISORY AUTHORITIES OF THE AMERICAS

In response to an invitation by the Chairman of the Association of Bank Supervisors of the Americas (ASBA) and the Superintendent of Banks of Peru, CAPTAC-DR Financial Supervision Resident Expert, Jose Roberto Effio, attended the 14th High-Level Meeting of ASBA in Lima, Peru, on October 1-2, 2019. The Resident Expert joined the financial supervisory authorities of the CAPDR region, represented by the Superintendents of Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama, the Honduran CNBS commissioner, and the Deputy Superintendent of Banks of El Salvador.

Representatives of ASBA member countries members and guests from other organizations discussed several relevant issues on banking supervision and regulation, including: institutional arrangements for financial sector authorities, especially on the experiences of integrated and non-integrated authorities dealing with multiple mandates, and some thoughts on the new challenges after the global financial crisis; experiences of coordination and cooperation between financial authorities, synergies, conflicts of objectives and their implications to safeguard financial stability; the supervisory review process under Pillar II- and the implementation of the proportionality. They also discussed the lessons learned from past banking crises, focused on the resolution framework and process, and the preparation of supervisors. The key priorities and projects, currently on the agenda of regional regulators and supervisors, were also discussed.

This event was organized by the Peruvian Superintendent, Ms. Socorry Heysen, and the agenda was headed by Mr. Fernando Restoy, Chairman of the FSI; Mr. Paulo Sérgio Neves de Souza, Chairman of the Board of ASBA; and, Mr. Pablo Hernández de Cos, Governor of the Bank of Spain and Chairman of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS). Mr. Agustin Carstens, General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), presented the introductory comments, and Mr. Julio Velarde, Governor of the Central Reserve Bank of Peru, addressed a special presentation on the Economic Outlook in Latin America.





# NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Second part of the course on National Account Statistics imparted by the National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INEC)

On September 23-27, CAPTAC-DR held workshops on different techniques of quarterly national accounts that allows the improvement of short-term data series in Panama. This activity is part of the agenda for the rebasing of national accounts that INEC plans to carry out, including the implementation of the 2008 SNA. The training courses that have been undertaken at the country level allow to strengthen the skills of national accounts teams in advance to and throughout their rebasing projects. The combination of conceptual elements and practical workshops based on the data series allows interaction between the different areas of basic statistics, national accounts, and price indices. CAPTAC-DR continues to work on strengthening technical capacities in terms of national accounts and prices of its member countries.



7th Joint Meeting of the CMCA Ad Hoc Groups on Macroeconomic Statistics within the Framework of the Regional Harmonization Process of Macroeconomic Statistics, Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, held on September 10-11.

The Central Bank of the Dominican Republic hosted the 7th Joint Meeting of the Central American Monetary Board (CMCA) Ad Hoc Groups on Macroeconomic Statistics. Relevant issues of the joint agendas on macro statistical harmonization issues were reviewed for two days. Representatives from the areas of Monetary and Financial Statistics, Balance of Payments, Government Finance Statistics, and National Accounts revised priorities to address in terms of conceptual harmonization and data dissemination mechanisms. CAPTAC-DR works on the statistical macro harmonization macro as a mechanism to enhance the skills that have been developing since the beginning of the Center's activities in the region.



# CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION

## THE REGIONAL CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS STRENGTHEN THEIR COOPERATION TO FIGHT AGAINST VAT FRAUD

One of the most significant risks faced by customs in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic is the declaration of a wrong value of goods at the time of importation, thus reducing the tax base and, therefore, avoiding the payment of VAT, as well as the customs duties when applicable.

To address the risk of under-invoicing, the Directors-General of Customs of the countries of the region (Customs Committee) approved the reactivation of the Central American Commission of Customs Value during the first round of Central American Customs Union, held on August 19-23 in Guatemala. This action responds to one of the milestones set in the Central American Strategy of Integrated Risk Management in Customs (ERGIRA), which is a tool used as the regional guide to fighting tax evasion and smuggling. It also serves to facilitate licit trade in the region, which was developed with the technical assistance of CAPTAC-DR. This Commission was created in 2008, with the enforcement of CAUCA IV and its Regulations; however, for different reasons, it was not active. It has the following functions:

1. **Identify** customs valuation problems faced by customs services;
2. **Propose**, to the Customs Committee, technical criteria regarding customs valuation.
3. **Propose**, to the Customs Committee, the administrative (regulatory or operational) provisions that it should issue for the correct interpretation and implementation of the Valuation Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO), CAUCA, and RECAUCA.
4. **Perform** such other duties as assigned by the Customs Committee.

In summary, this Commission is responsible for coordinately defining and recommending measures that contribute to a correct and uniform application of the Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (WTO). Thereby, it strengthens the control applied to imports made in the region, mainly through post-clearance audits to promote voluntary compliance and, as a result, offset the VAT evasion gap in the region, which reaches levels of up to 37 percent in some countries.

*According to customs administrations statistics in the CAPDR region, the undervaluation of goods at the time of import represents up to 95% of the total differences found at the time of physical inspections in customs.*

The first meeting of this Commission was held on October 10, attended by Selvin Lemus, Resident Expert in customs administration and Guzmán Mañes, customs expert, both CAPTAC-DR participated. The Center has provided technical assistance to countries in the region in terms of the strengthening control of customs valuation and fighting evasion.

The Committee is planned to hold meetings every two months, and CAPTAC-DR was invited to continue participating, which is planned to continue to align our technical assistance with the needs of the countries in the region.



Primera Ronda de Unión Aduanera  
Centroamericana, segundo semestre 2019



Fotografía tomada en SIECA

19 - 23 de agosto de 2019



ORGANIZACIÓN  
MUNDIAL  
DEL COMERCIO

Acuerdo Relativo a la Aplicación del Artículo VII del GATT  
(Acuerdo de Valoración de la OMC)





## **CAPTAC-DR STRENGTHENS THE COORDINATION WITH OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS TO SUPPORT THE CUSTOMS OF THE REGION**

The Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic region has been characterized in recent years by having different donors and technical assistance providers interested in supporting their countries from different points of view, and CAPTAC-DR is one of them. One of the issues that this support has focused on is the strengthening of public institutions in charge of generating tax revenues and promoting regional competitiveness.

This particular situation could be an essential advantage; however, it may also become a huge challenge as we explain below. On the one hand, this support allows these institutions to have a higher capacity to carry out their reform and modernization agendas through the technical and financial resources that these agencies provide. Notwithstanding, the challenge occurs when these public institutions do not adequately manage the resources provided, sometimes generating duplication or overlap in the support received. On other occasions, these institutions are not appropriately organized to absorb such support and convert it into results consisting of greater voluntary compliance and better services rendered to taxpayers.

To prevent duplication or overlap in the support that public institutions receive, CAPTAC-DR has the policy of seeking effective coordination with other donors and technical assistance providers. This has resulted in several initiatives of great benefit to the region, such as the participation of customs officials at the World Customs Organization (WCO) Information Technology/Technology Innovation Conference held in Lima, Peru on 2018, or the coordination meetings between organized donors every year between the WCO, IMF and IDB, among others.





As a result of this coordination, in the last quarter, CAPTAC-DR has participated in two initiatives that are worth highlighting due to their contribution to the countries of the region, as follows:

1. **Comprehensive Border Management Academy:** USAID coordinates this initiative through the regional trade facilitation and border management project. The initiative aims to customs, internal taxes, migration, and phytosanitary and zoosanitary officials working border positions of the northern triangle. Its main objective is to promote inter-agency coordination at the border within the framework of international best practices, to combat fraud, and improve competitiveness in the region. The second version of the 4-week Pilot Course of this Academy took place on September 2-27, 2019, at the headquarters of the Center for Economic Integration Studies of SIECA, an institution that also participates in the organization of this initiative, as well as AMEXID and CAPTAC-DR. This Center participated through our Customs Administration Resident Expert, Mr. Selvin Lemus, who, together with SIECA and government officials of Chile, Mexico, and the United States, participated as speakers and shared their experience with participating officials.

2. **CAPTAC-DR/IMF - World Bank Group Coordination:** The World Bank has always been an important partner for the region, so the Ministries of Finance of El Salvador and Costa Rica asked its support in strengthening the internal revenue and customs administrations in these countries. Given the close collaboration between the World Bank (WB) and the IMF in various countries around the world, they organized two joint BM-CAPTAC-DR/IMF missions. These missions established different points where both agencies work in a coordinated manner in the coming years to support tax and customs reform and modernization projects in these countries, aligned with the needs that each agency has in its field of competence. It is also important to mention that CAPTAC-DR has continuously coordinated its activities with its financial partners, like BCIE, Spain, Luxembourg, Mexico, the European Union, and Norway, as well as with other agencies such as the IDB, WCO, SIECA, among others. This coordination allows the most efficient use of resources. It provides more significant possibilities to obtain concrete results in strengthening the public institutions that are receiving our technical assistance and, therefore, of the Center's Member Countries.

