A Discussion Document on Coordinated Border Management for the United Arab Emirates

Authored by:

Peter Carson, Paul Poirror, Dan Rochon, Chris Thibedeau

TTEK
www.ttekglobal.com

December, 2021

Foreward

The purpose of this document is to facilitate discussion towards the development of uniform border security controls and coorindation with the responsible agencies within the UAE in line with international best practices. Control duties at sovereign borders include tasks such as the prevention of smuggling of goods, narcotics, weapons, prohibited items, illegal migration, pandemic threats, plants and animals, as well as strengthening of security controls due to threats of international terrorism. At the same time, international trade and tourism demands more open borders.

Several UAE border agencies are challenged with overlapping control duties, particularly concerning customs, border police and immigration agencies.

Clearly defined responsibilities and interagency cooperation help solve these challenges

 As a result, border agencies are required to seek a balance between security and facilitation. This can be a challenging balance to maintain, and close cooperation of the various agencies involved is vital to achieving long-term success. Where some control duties can be attributed to specific border agencies, there are identifiable areas of overlap - particularly concerning Customs, border police/immigration, MANAFTH, and other government agencies (OGAs) in the UAE. Clearly defined competencies and professional cooperation are preconditions for operational success.

Coordinated Border Management (CBM) is a concept providing the principles and frameworks for multiple agency coordination and cooperation. Constructive discussion on CBM between the right stakeholders can define a roadmap for establishing a structured and effective collaboration among border agencies, which in turn will provide the necessary balance for success. Success is achieved by balancing trade facilitation with enhanced security controls, resulting in economic prosperity for the UAE and it's regional partners. With over 300 Border Modernization experts available, TTEK has become a clear market leader for border management solutions and has had the privilege to work closely with many UAE staskeholders on strengthening border processes, policies, and systems, along their digital transformation journey. This document is an investment on TTEK's behalf to share inight and best practice in relation to the topic of CBM and syntheize it for our many friends, collegues, and partners in the UAE and the GCC region. While this discussion document attempts to link the concept of CBM for the UAE, it may be applied to other countries as well.   We hope our readers find it useful.

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

Many stakeholder agencies in the UAE are directly involved in border controls associated with the movement of goods people and conveyances. This includes local, federal, regional and international groups, plus the Customs administrations of the seven emirates — Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Fujairah, Ajman and Ra's al-Khaimah.

On Sept 23, 2021, President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan approved a Decree establishing **the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Ports Security**. This new entity merges the Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship (ICA), the Federal Customs Authority (FCA), and the General Authority of Ports, Borders and Free Zones Security (MANAFTH) under one new entity.

Border control authorities around the world face increasing volumes of people and goods – without necessarily a corresponding increase in resources. Traders and travellers have greater expectations for expedited processing and clearance times whilst governments and society expect border authorities to rigorously apply laws and regulations in order to protect society including the fight against various fiscal and non fiscal threats. This can include terrorism, illegal migration, narcotics, prohibited goods, illegal weapons and ammunition, hazardous materials, plant and animal health threats, pandemic threats, endangered species, undervaluation, misclassification, misdeclaration of origin, and many other threats causing damage to the economic and social well being of the UAE.

National Security and Transnational Organized Crime groups wilfully exploit international borders. By actively conducting counter intelligence exercises these threats study and exploit policy, procedures, resources, technologies, infrastructure, and lack of inter-agency collaboration and coordination to circumvent detection to successfully conduct their illicit activities.

In order to address these gaps, countries around the world have launched initiatives to increase interoperability and collaboration between agencies at the border. These are generally referred to as Integrated Border Management (IBM) or Coordinated Border Management (CBM). Although different in terminology, both focus on the same goal of maximizing coordination, collaboration, and interoperability to reduce duplication and redundancies, while harmonizing and enhancing the aspects of security and trade facilitation at the border. The end result is economic prosperity. This business transformation is accomplished at strategic, operational, and tactical levels, - with common and uniform policy, program, and systems enhancements. The following diagram attempts to show these inherent relationships as 9 key touch points:

	Policy	Program	Systems
Strategic	1	4	7
Operational	2	5	8
Tacticl	3	6	9

The term Coordinated Border Management (CBM) is embraced by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and endorses a collaborative and uniform approach for "Trade" related processing by all border agencies. This is within the context of seeking greater efficiencies over managing cross border trade, while maintaining an appropriate balance with security and protection mandates. The European Union (EU) produced its first version of *Integrated Border Management Guidelines* in 2004, with the World Customs Organisation (WCO) publishing its first *Coordinated Border Management Compendium* in 2006. Over the years, variations of the concept has surfaced across various forums - Integrated Border Management (EU), Collaborative Border Management (World Bank - WB), and Comprehensive Border Management (Organisation for Security and Stability in Europe - OSCE). For the purposes of this document, we will be using the term Coordinated Border Management (CBM).

These terms/models all refer to the same principles, which essentially proposes that all cross-border government agencies discharge their respective regulatory functions in an aligned and coordinated manner, whether related to policies, programs,or systems. While there is an obvious link to discuss an approach for National Single Window (NSW) and the associated processing of controlled and regulated goods; this document will attempt to stay within the lane of CBM, with a theme on the shared security aspects and controls -for the cross border movement of people and goods. NSW is trade related and provides one part of the solution and could be a recommendation after a more indepth analysis and diagnostic on border coordination.

Many International Organisations support the concept of Coordinated Border Management – and there are various documents and guideline which have been produced to assist governments with modernizing their respective border controls. These Organisations include; the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) – *"Budapest Process"*; European Union *"Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans"*; Organisation for Security and Stability in Europe (OSCE) – *"Supporting Border Management"*; World Bank Group *(through Global Facilitation Partnership (GFP) for Transportation and Trade publication*; and the World Customs Organisation, *"Coordinated Border Management Compendium."*

While the main concept of CBM is trade-focused, closer cooperation between border agencies can also enhance passenger controls and general border security.

The Global Facilitation Partnership (GFP) for Transportation and Trade (from World Bank Group) has defined CBM as *"the organisation and supervision of border agency activities to meet the common challenge of facilitating the movement of legitimate people and goods while maintaining secure borders and meeting national legal requirements"*

Meanwhile, the European Commission (EC) Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans use the definition of *"National and International coordination and cooperation among the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation to establish effective, efficient and integrated border management systems, in order to reach the objective of open, but well-controlled and secure borders".*

As previously stated above, all 'Border Management' publications from various International Organisations support the need to balance trade (and passenger) facilitation with security. This approach allows legitimate goods and travellers to pass through borders without unnecessary intrusive inspections, -while protecting the sovereign state from threats posed by terrorism, organized crime, smuggling, commercial fraud, counterfeit goods, health and pandemic threats, narcotics, dual use goods, chemical weapons precursors, prohibited goods, and much more.

> UAE stakeholder agencies at the local and federal level could endorse the concept of CBM and use its principals to inform current bi-lateral and multi-agency discussions and actively promote its adoption throughout the UAE.

This critical balance is achieved by embracing risk management as the guiding princinple for border management. The foundation of border risk management is realized using risk assessment systems, trusted trader regimes to identify authorized economic operators, and an ability to obtain the "right data at the right time" to make more informed decisions with Advance Commercial Information (ACI), and Advance Passenger Information (API).

There is no 'preferred' option – the WCO sees CBM more as a guide for the border agencies and not a one-size-fits-all model.

www.ttekglobal.com

The UAE could advance many current border modernization efforts in a coordinated and collaborative manner to maximize the benefits of CBM through improved border controls and enhanced national security measures.

As a tangible example for further discussion and consideration, Manafth and Abu Dhabi Customs have recently taken the first step towards cooperation and coordination, through shared use of risk-rules within the Manafth Advance Cargo Information (ACI) system. By centralizing their targeting and selectivity, Abu Dhabi Customs will be positioned to identify high risk trade for closer scrutiny or inspection under their mission and mandate. As a next step, Manafth could consider embracing the concept of CBM, and use these principals to inform current bi-lateral and multi-agency discussions and actively promote adoption of CBM throughout the UAE. Manafth could consider embracing a unique coorindation role, as their mandate includes the control of ports, borders, and free zones across 7 Emirates - and increased cooperation with Customs from each of those Emirates (as represented with Abu Dhabi Customs) can only be of benefit to the whole of the UAE.

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING THE 7 PAGE ABSTRACT OF THIS CBM DOCUMENT. THE FULL SIZE OF THIS WHITE PAPER IS 33 PAGES. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN THE FULL DOCUMENT WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEND IT TO YOU BY MAKING A REQUEST TO: INFO@TTEKGLOBAL.COM