

## Illicit Trade Summit of Customs Directors-General Americas Region

*Panama City on 26-27 March 2024*

### Summit framework

- La Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas de Panama (ANA)” and the “Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) are convening the 1<sup>st</sup> Illicit Trade Summit of Customs Directors-General of the Americas. This event will take place in Panama City on 26-27 March 2024.
- The Summit will bring together more than 30 Customs Directors-General, with the objective to strengthen coordination, capabilities and common standards in mitigating illicit trade.

### Drivers

Illicit traders routinely traffic a wide variety of illicit products throughout the Americas region, including alcohol, tobacco, counterfeits, pesticides, petroleum and pharmaceuticals. There is also significant illicit trade in forestry products, fish, wildlife and gemstones.

Traffickers exploit structural and situational weaknesses that are common to Customs authorities throughout the America’s region. These challenges include limited risk-profiling information; lack of training and capacity building; lack of effective cooperation with prosecutors and other law enforcement agencies; inadequate or outdated laws.

Traffickers use various tactics to exploit these weaknesses, such as concealment and transshipment techniques, origin laundering, false documentation, and bribery. They may also ship raw materials for assembly at destination points and mix illicit items with legal ones.

Notably, TRACIT has engaged with stakeholders reporting similar challenges and capacity needs in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.

### Scope of discussions

- Risk-profiling systems, information and sharing.
- Training and capacity building to improve identification and detainment.
- Modernization of regulatory frameworks, inadequate/outdated laws (e.g., by sharing best practices from other countries, US 21<sup>st</sup> Century Customs Framework).
- Address corruption.
- Strengthen Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) programs.
- Awareness and certification of FTZs.