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# Uganda: URA's Cargo Monitoring System Kicks Off

BY ALLAN KYOBE SSEMEBWA, 28 JANUARY 2014

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A \$5.2m system that electronically monitors movement of goods in the country has kicked off.

The pilot phase of the Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS) started last November and runs up to end of February 2014. It kicked off at the six customs points; namely, Malaba, Kampala, Mpondwe, Katuna, Elegu and Oraba where gadgets capable of e-sealing, e-tracking and reporting a consignment's location and status are fitted and activated. They are deactivated at destination or exit.

Subsequently, the Transit Monitoring Unit gets the real time position of a goods-laden truck and intervenes if its movement and status contravene the transit procedures. According to the Commissioner Customs, Richard Kamajugo, the pilot started with motor vehicle units and high-risk items like sugar, rice, batteries, wine, textiles, and electronics. All these are transit goods. The system was also used on Arabica coffee, hides and skins, and transit goods from Rwanda headed to Mombasa.

Following the successful launch, Kamajugo disclosed, the system will be officially commissioned in March and rolled out to all stations thereafter.

"So far so good. The system is doing what we intended. We can tell in real time where the goods are. Our stakeholders are happy," he stated.

A brainchild of Uganda Revenue Authority, ECTS ceased being a wish in March 2013 when the tax collector signed an agreement with Asia-based BSMART Technology. The system monitors goods, giving real-time feedback to the control centre. The knowledge about the whereabouts and state of a given consignment is expected to reduce URA's cost of doing business. It will be beneficial to importers and clearing agents as well.

### How it works

ECTS relies on e-tracks and e-seals, which are attached onto a goods-laden vehicle or units. The devices communicate with a control centre, giving real time updates. These include position of the vehicle, speed and status of the container (truck-tampered with or not) among others. In units, these devices are fixed into cigarette lighters.

The information relayed by the device can be viewed by the importer, transporter, clearing agent and URA. And if the device is tampered with, the control centre is notified instantaneously and action is taken accordingly.

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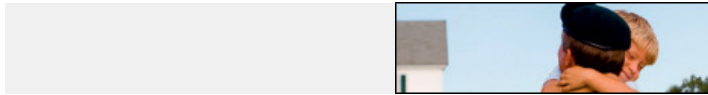


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