

## Monitoring Salvadorian cross-border activities with Cotecna

An integrated approach for improved efficiency and safer borders

**SECTOR**  
Ports, airports and borders

**CUSTOMER**  
Ministry of Finance & Customs – El Salvador

**CHALLENGE**  
Provide non-intrusive X-ray inspection of goods exported, imported and in transit without causing delays in Customs operations and procedures and the centralization of data

**SOLUTION**  
Integrated solutions and centralized data management system

**RESULT**  
Safer foreign trade operations in El Salvador, effective control of dangerous and illegal cargo, and an increase in tax revenue collection by highlighting undeclared goods

### BACKGROUND

The Republic of El Salvador is the smallest and the most densely populated country in Central America. El Salvador borders the Pacific Ocean on the south and borders by land to the countries of Guatemala to the west and Honduras to the north and east.

El Salvador is a country with an exceptionally high crime rate and has been rated "critical" for crime by the U.S. Department of State. As a result, the country requires high protection from the best security equipment available to safeguard society.

The El Salvadorian Dirección General de Aduanas (Customs Department) are responsible for controlling the export, import and transit of goods at all the country's border crossing and entry points, safeguarding the country against smuggling, the illegal trafficking of narcotics, weapons, contraband and any other illegal goods and substances into the country, along with detecting undeclared goods and associated tax evasion practices.

The most significant border entry and exit points for foreign trade in the country include the Guatemala and Honduras land crossing routes at La Hachadura, Anguiatú, El Poy and El Amtillo, as well as the international airport at Comalapa, sea port at Acajutla and the Dirección General de Aduanas headquarters in the district of San Bartolo in the nation's capital.

### THE CHALLENGE

Non-intrusive inspection activities are required to help in the fight to detect and locate threats and pinpoint the movement of illegal goods. To prevent unnecessary barriers to global trade during this process, the control and inspection of traffic needed to be performed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without causing delays in Customs operations and procedures.

Corruption is a constant concern in El Salvador and is highly scrutinized. Therefore, to avoid any interference and potential collusion with fraudsters, all relevant data and images of vehicle contents must be securely networked, analysed, managed and tightly controlled at the Customs Control Centre in San Bartolo.



### THE SOLUTION

In conjunction with local partner Cotecna, Smiths Detection worked closely with Dirección General de Aduanas on the first turnkey multi-border inspection project to fully safeguard the country's borders.

Consignments travelling through the country are assessed for risk to determine the scanning requirements. An integrated approach allows the appropriate level of screening to be applied, ranging from re-checks on different X-ray systems to checks with hand-held equipment to detect traces of explosives on vehicles and palletized cargo.

In total Smiths Detection supplied 21 systems to Cotecna, who financed their purchase, carried out extensive civil engineering and construction works and subsequently operated them in-country. Three types of high energy scanning systems were specified: Relocatable HCVM T mobile vehicle scanners, for the non-intrusive inspection of cargo and vehicles, HCVL, for the automatic scanning of cars and light vehicles, helping highlight drugs, weapons and undeclared goods in passenger traffic; and HCVP standalone system for high throughput commercial traffic areas.

In addition HI-SCAN 145180 and HI-SCAN 180180 X-ray machines were required to inspect palletized freight and cargo at the Comalapa international airport and in bonded warehouses throughout the country. The small, handheld SABRE 5000 was also selected, to provide an additional layer of protection, helping to detect and identify trace explosives.

All the high performance X-ray solutions offer superior steel penetration, resulting in high resolution images of vehicles and their contents for quicker analysis of results. Operators are able to perform timely and reliable verification of goods and quickly highlight suspect loads for further detailed manual inspection.

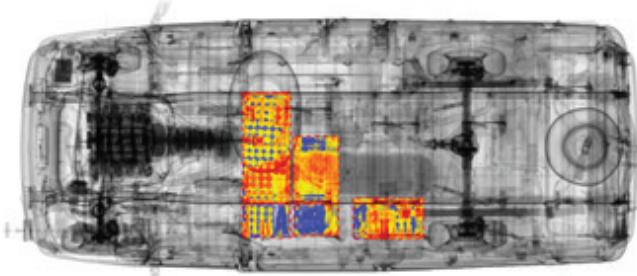


Fig 1: HCVL image of undeclared goods

All inspection X-ray images and associated data are processed through a centralised DMS (Dataset Management Systems) and analysed online at the Customs Headquarters Control Centre. The on-site Cotecna operators are responsible for the scanning process, including checking and completing the dataset information (customs' declaration, ID container, vehicle license plate and weight where applicable). The verdict is automatically returned to the local scanning site, where local Customs officials proceed with the appropriate procedures.

## THE RESULT

### Improved efficiency, increased tax collection and safer borders

Smiths Detection's integrated approach and Cotecna's operating know-how have resulted in a significant increase in the throughput of inspected traffic through the various border checkpoints at El Salvador by reducing time associated with lengthy manual inspections. Illegal and undeclared goods have been highlighted and intercepted, increasing valuable tax revenue and ultimately impacting the security of foreign trade operations in El Salvador.

## ABOUT COTECNA

Founded in Switzerland in 1974, the Cotecna group offers a wide range of Testing, Inspection, Verification and Certification services. Cotecna is a pioneer in areas such as risk management, destination inspection and scanner integration projects for Customs administrations. Cotecna verifies contractual compliance for a wide range of commodities and consumer goods and also provides trade finance services for lenders and financiers. The Cotecna Group has a combined workforce of about 4,000 employees and agents in over 100 offices. For a full description of our services, please visit [www.cotecna.com](http://www.cotecna.com).

## ABOUT SMITHS DETECTION

Smiths Detection offers advanced security solutions in civil and military markets worldwide, developing and manufacturing government-regulated technology products that help detect and identify explosives, chemical and biological agents, radiological and nuclear threats, weapons, narcotics and contraband.

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