



From Bottleneck to Flow

El Salvador Customs Modernises Border Inspection with High-Energy Scanning

The Customer:

El Salvador Customs (Dirección General de Aduanas)

El Salvador Customs is the national authority responsible for customs control and trade facilitation under the Ministry of Finance. As cross-border trade across Central America becomes more connected, customs agencies face a dual mandate: enable legitimate movement at pace, while disrupting illicit flows with greater certainty.

The Challenge:

Faster, More Confident Border Decisions at Scale

Borders are operational choke points. Every minute added to inspection time increases congestion, cost, and risk. For customs teams, the challenge is consistent: identify high-risk vehicles and consignments quickly, reduce unnecessary manual inspections, and keep trade moving.

This is particularly acute as El Salvador and its neighbours progress toward more integrated

cross-border operations designed to improve competitiveness and streamline trade. At the same time, Central America remains exposed to transnational smuggling and trafficking flows, reinforcing the need for robust, intelligence-led inspection capability at ports and land borders.

The Solution:

Drive-Through Portal Coverage, Plus Mobile High-Energy Flexibility

Smiths Detection has secured a contract to supply El Salvador Customs, with a suite of automatic drive-through scanner portals for inspection of vehicles and containers, complemented by a mobile high-energy inspection system.

The systems will be manufactured and delivered across 2026 and early 2027.

Drive-through portal inspection (HCVP):

HCVP portals are designed for continuous vehicle flow and non-intrusive inspection of trucks, containers, and vehicles at scale. In operational terms, that means higher throughput and stronger front-line screening decisions, with fewer avoidable delays and reduced dependence on manual inspection.

**Mobile high-energy inspection (HCVM):**

HCVM adds operational agility. It can be deployed where demand is highest and is designed to be ready for use in under 20 minutes, with minimal infrastructure requirements. This gives customs teams the ability to reinforce capacity, respond to shifting threat patterns, and maintain control during peak volumes or targeted operations.

Software-enabled decision support:

Across high-energy operations, systems can be configured with tools, algorithms, and machine-learning options to support faster, more consistent analysis and higher throughput at the point of inspection.

Why Smiths Detection?

El Salvador Customs' selection reflects a clear operational logic:

- **Scalable throughput:** drive-through portals are built for high-volume inspection without compromising operational flow
- **Deployment flexibility:** a mobile high-energy platform provides rapid reinforcement where and when it is needed
- **A resilient architecture:** fixed capacity plus mobile response creates a stronger, more adaptable inspection system across multiple sites
- **Proven continuity:** a reliable software platform that brings confidence in integration, support, and lifecycle management



These tools will enable faster and more accurate inspections, the ability to scan more than 100 vehicles per hour, a reduction in manual inspections, improved detection of illicit activities, and optimized risk management."

Benjamin Mayorga, El Salvador Customs General Director

The Outcome:

A Modern Inspection Infrastructure Designed for Flow and Control

Once operational, the new inspection infrastructure is designed to help El Salvador Customs:

- Increase screening throughput while maintaining inspection confidence
- Reduce unnecessary manual inspections through stronger non-intrusive triage
- Improve agility by redeploying mobile high-energy inspection as risk and volume shift
- Strengthen deterrence and disruption by increasing the likelihood of detection without slowing legitimate trade

