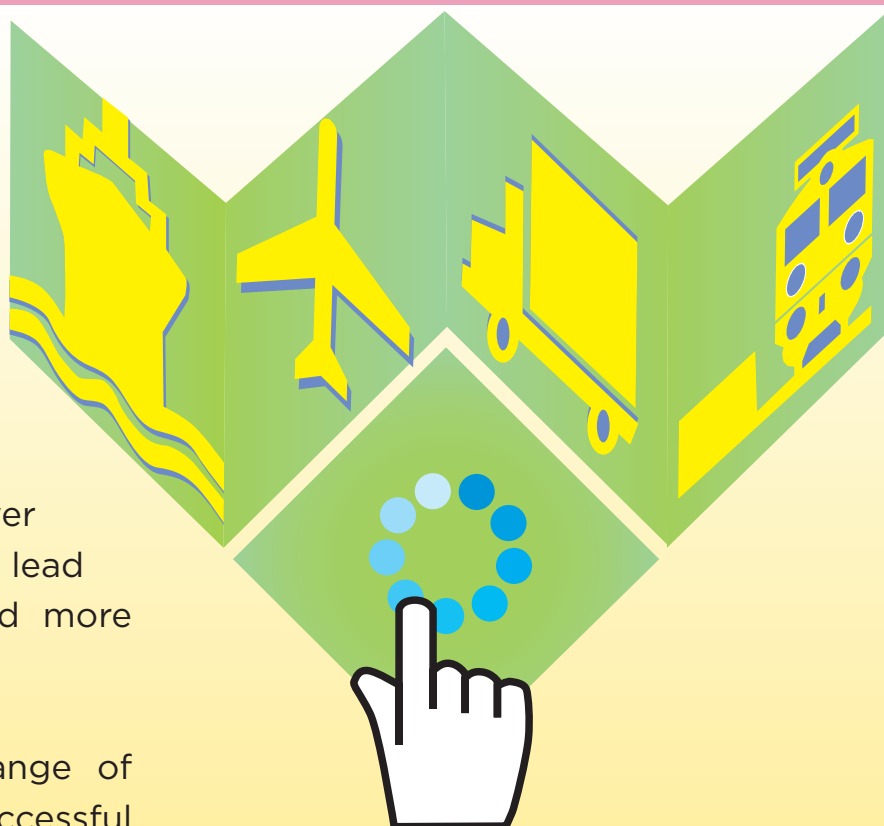


TOWARDS A SINGLE WINDOW TRADING ENVIRONMENT

Developing a National Single Window for Import, Export and Logistics in Thailand

A number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region are in the process of establishing national electronic Single Window facilities. A Single Window can greatly simplify trade processes and procedures and improve transparency and predictability in international trade transactions. This means less delays and lower costs of trade that can ultimately lead to improved competitiveness and more trade.



UNNExT Brief series cover a range of critical issues to be tackled in the successful development of paperless trade and Single Window initiatives. Also, they showcase best practices in the region to share experiences and lessons learned.

This Brief introduces Thailand's National Single Window (NSW). The Brief describes how the Thai NSW has evolved into the current model in the process of its implementation, major functions and services it provides and the benefits it brought to the Government and the trading community. The Brief also includes lessons learnt in the process of establishing the Single Window environment in Thailand.

Developing a National Single Window (NSW) for Import, Export and Logistics in Thailand

Introduction

Before 1998, cargo release and clearance procedures in Thailand was essentially based on paper documents, although a computer system was introduced for the purpose of capturing import and export data, trade statistics and for the operation of a management information system. An Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system for customs clearance was officially implemented in April 1998 with nationwide operation achieved in 2000. The EDI system enabled electronic document exchange between customs administration and trading communities, including importers, exporters, customs brokers, freight forwarders, container yards, inland container depots, warehouses, export processing zones, banks, sea carriers, air carriers, land carriers, sea ports and airports.

Thailand adopted UN/EDIFACT and XML standards when implementing the EDI system for cargo release and clearance during the period of 1998 – 2006. Traders were allowed to lodge several sets of documents for single submission through the EDI system. However, at that stage, a trader still needed to submit a set of cargo declaration and supporting paper documents for cargo clearance, as required by relevant laws. A major transition from the EDI system to the e-Customs paperless service began in 2006. This included introduction of the ebXML standard, adoption of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) and recognition of digital signatures, which together enabled the development of a paperless cargo clearance environment in Thailand. The e-Customs paperless service entered into full operation nationwide in July 2008.

National policy to establish Thailand Single Window e-Logistics

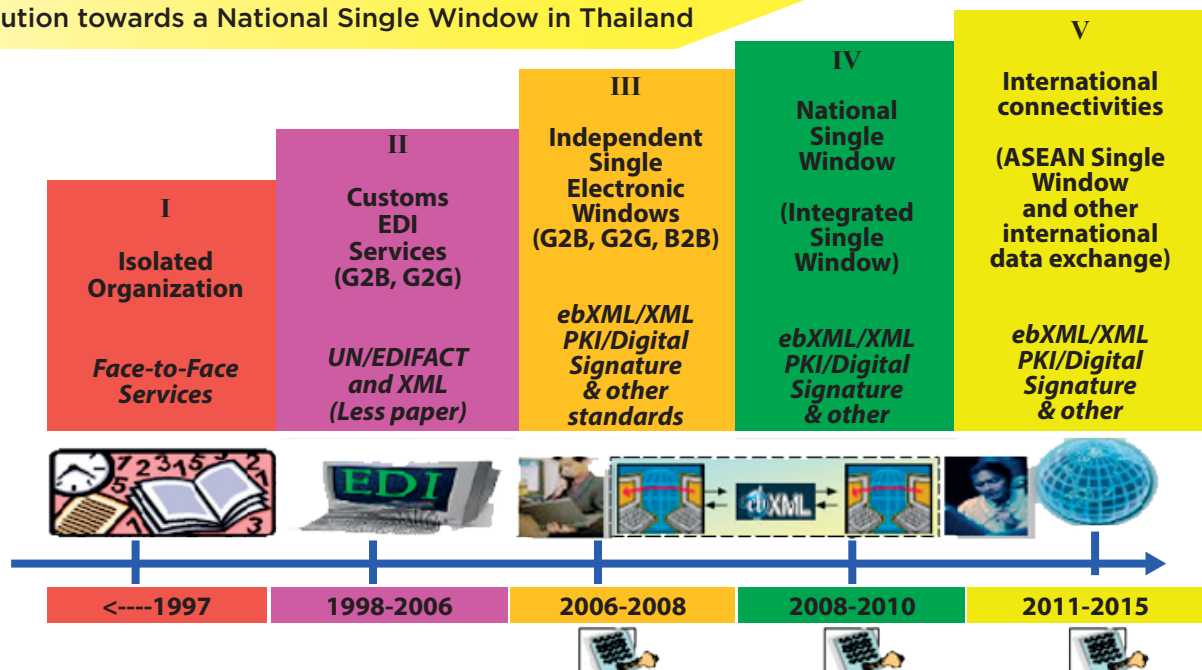
Following establishment of the National Logistics Committee chaired by the Prime Minister, the first Logistics Development Strategy was drafted by the National Economics and Social Development Board (NESDB) and approved by the Cabinet in 2007. The main objectives of the Logistics Development Strategy are to increase cost efficiency, customer responsiveness and reliability, security in logistics services, and economic values in logistics and support industries.

It accordingly comprises the following 5 strategic agendas:

1. Logistics Improvement for all sectors, led by the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture;
2. Transport and Logistics Network Optimization, led by the Ministry of Transport;
3. Logistics Service Implementation, led by the Ministry of Commerce;
4. Trade Facilitation Enhancement, led by the Ministry of Finance; and
5. Capacity Building for the logistics sector, led by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and the National Economic and Social Development Board.

The Thailand Single Window e-Logistics (National Single Window) was one of the core component Strategic Agenda (Trade Facilitation Enhancement) The EDI system for customs clearance, implemented in 1998, provided the basis for taking an initial step to establish an electronic single window for import and export. Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of Thailand single window implementation.

Figure 1: Evolution towards a National Single Window in Thailand



Transition to the Thailand National Single Window (THAI-NSW)

The establishment of THAINSW was initiated in accordance with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in particular commitments laid out in the “Agreement to establish and implement the ASEAN Single Window. According to this Agreement, 10 NSW systems of ASEAN Member States would be gradually integrated and operated in an electronic environment in line with the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015. In December 2005, the Government of Thailand appointed the Customs Department, Ministry of Finance to be the lead agency for establishing the National Single Window with other relevant agencies as partners.

The Thailand Logistics Committee established the National Sub-Committee on Integrated Information Linkage for Import, Export and Logistics, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. The National Sub-Committee consists of executives from relevant government authorities and business communities. The Thailand Single Window e-Logistics was renamed as the Thailand National Single Window by the National Sub-Committee in

January 2008 in order to enhance understanding of the single window development and facilitate integrated data linkage among government and business sectors as well as resource mobilization related to National Single Window and ASEAN Single Window implementation.

Implementation of the THAI-NSW

One of the key components of the THAI-NSW introduced in 2007 is called the “e-Customs Paperless Service,” which enabled automated cargo release and clearance nationwide since 2008. The THAI-NSW began its official operation in July 2008, enabling the exchange of electronic documents among government authorities and business communities in paperless service environment. As of November 2011, THAI-NSW has about 8,000 subscribers, serving about 100,000 traders and 36 government authorities involved in import, export, logistics and supply chains. Government and business sectors have agreed upon the adoption of ebXML standard, public key infrastructure (PKI), and digital signature for secure electronic document exchange within the single window environment.

The National Logistics Committee endorsed the Regulatory Framework Model of the Thailand National Single Window in 2010, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Conceptual Model of Thailand National Single Window



Box 1. Legal Framework to Enhance Electronic Transaction

In Thailand, the Electronic Transactions Act (ETA) of 2001 has legally enabled the use and exchange of electronic documents in a paperless environment since it came into force in April 2002. Thailand has continued to develop and improve its legal framework for electronic transactions since then, with the second amendment to the ETA (in 2008) allowing for the acceptance of scanned documents as original. A third amendment to the ETA has been drafted by the Thailand Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) with a view to further facilitate international electronic transactions. Specific laws and regulations of relevant government agencies involved in the THAI-NSW are under revision so as to enhance information sharing in a paperless environment among them and the business sectors.

Key Functions of THAI-NSW

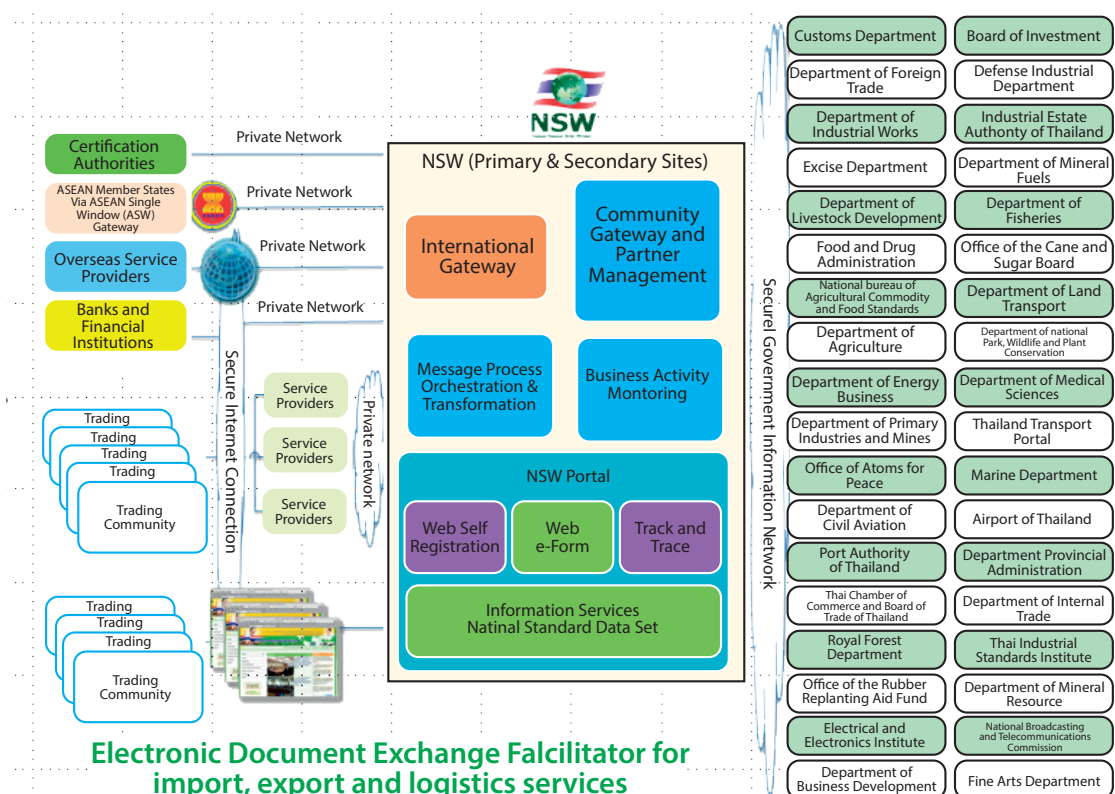
The THAI-NSW has been established in accordance with international standards, best practices and recommendations of relevant international bodies such as World Customs Organization (WCO), United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), among others

The major functions of the THAI-NSW are to:

- Serve as national router providing a standardized and regulated environment facilitating seamless and streamlined routing of data and information related to import, export and logistics services among government agencies and business communities.
- Act as a functional integrator and host for shared applications, bringing regulatory and commercial functions, streamlining the processing of standardized and harmonized information flow related to cross-border trade transactions. This includes hosting of shared Single Window components such as a Permit Application System, Customs Declaration Application System, Payment Application System, Track and Trace System and other services.
- Provide an electronic file repository for sharing references among relevant parties, such as implementation guidelines, laws, regulations, agreements, Memorandum of Understandings, training materials, reference files, national standard data set, international standard code lists, study reports, and others.
- Be a national gateway and single point of access to interconnect with the ASEAN Single Window and other Single Window systems within and outside the ASEAN region.

Figure 3 illustrates the technical architecture of the THAI-NSW environment and inter-connectivity among relevant stakeholders through the THAI-NSW.

Figure 3: Operating Environment of Thailand National Single Window



Major Services of THAI-NSW

The THAI-NSW enables secure electronic document exchange among government agencies and trading communities, serving about 660 customs stations nationwide including customs houses, container yards,

inland container depots, free zones, export processing zones, warehouses, seaports and airports since 2008. Table 1 lists key documents being exchanged among relevant parties through the THAI-NSW.

Table 1: Major Documents Exchanged via THAI-NSW (as of July 2012)

Import Customs Declaration	Cancel Declaration
Export Customs Declaration	Import License
Short Ship Declaration	Inland Declaration
Release Order (Board of Investment)	Special Import Declaration
Duty Payment	Export License
Duty Refund Declaration	Quota License
Tax Incentive Declaration	Import Certificate
Vessel Schedule	Export Certificate
Flight Schedule	Certificate of Origin
Sea Cargo Manifest Declaration	ATIGA Form D
Air Cargo Manifest Declaration	Transfer Declaration
Land Cargo Manifest Declaration	Bonded Warehouse Declaration
Container Operation Declaration	Good Transit Declaration
Express Goods Declaration	RFID Declaration
Cargo Movement Declaration	Response Message
Cargo Release Notification	Debit Advice
Payment Order	Credit Advice
Guarantee Deposit Declaration	Guarantee Refund Declaration
Formula Model Declaration	Reassessment Notification
ASEAN Customs Declaration Document	ATIGA Form D
Customs Clearance Result	Cancel Instruction
Export Information (Export Declaration and Invoice Information)	

Investment and Service Fees

In establishing the THAI-NSW System, funded by the Government of Thailand, the Customs Department, Ministry of Finance, purchased a turnkey solution to develop and maintain the THAI-NSW system. The cost of the THAI-NSW's developments (phase 1 & phase 2) was about US\$ 14 millions, excluding expenditures individually incurred by relevant government agencies and trading communities. All government agencies and traders can participate in the Single Window environment free of charge.

Traders pay only a small fee for electronic document submission through the service provider (VAN/VAS). The minimum charge is 25 Thai Baht (approximately US\$ 0.80) for less than 25 Kbytes of information. One Thai Baht is charged for each additional one

Kbyte. However, no matter what the size of document, the maximum charge may not be over 300 Thai Baht (approximately US\$ 9.60). The service fees are reviewed by the Steering Committee on Regulatory Framework and Quality Assurance of Thailand National Single Window.

Benefits for Government and Trading Communities

Government agencies and trading communities have gained significant benefits from participating in the THAI-NSW service since 2008, as illustrated in Tables 2 and 3. It is estimated that logistics cost savings from the implementation of the THAI-NSW may reach US\$ 1.5 billions annually.

Table 2: Improvement of Cargo Clearance through THAI-NSW

Customs Clearance	Before 1998	1998 - 2007	2008 - 2011
Customs intervention	6-8 steps	2-4 steps	0 step (green) 1 step (red)
Document requirement	5 copies	1-3 copies	0 copy (green) 1 copy (red)
Intervention time	3-10 days	½ - 1 day	0 hour (green) 0.5-1 hour (red)
Turn around time (per declaration)	3-10 days	10- 30 minutes	95% < 5 minutes

Table 3: Improvement of Trade Efficiency through THAI-NSW

Trading across border	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Export					
No. of Documents to Export (number)	9	7	4	4	4
Time to Export (days)	24	17	14	14	14
Cost to Export (US\$ per container)	848	615	625	625	625
Import					
No. of Documents to Import (number)	12	9	3	3	3
Time to Import (days)	22	14	13	13	13
Cost to Import (US\$ per container)	1042	786	795	795	795

(Source: *Doing Business*, World Bank).

Lesson Learnt in Establishing a Single Window Environment in Thailand

During the course of developing the THAI-NSW, a number of factors were critical that helped successfully establishing and operating it. To facilitate success in creating a National Single Window environment, the Thai Government has paid due consideration to the following critical success factors:

1. A Strong Lead Agency

2. Partnership between Government and Trade

Establishing an electronic single window environment requires transition from the existing paper-based operation to the single window in paperless environment. To ensure the success of implementing a single window system, the lead agency needs to collaborate with relevant entities from both Government and business communities, particularly in terms of business process analysis and reforms, data harmonization and standardization in order to simplify and streamline relevant

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