



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation



APEC Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures

Working towards the implementation of
Single Window within APEC Economies

Single Window Strategic Plan
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Julie Olarenshaw

Chair Single Window Working Group

Prepared By
Australian Customs Service
5 Constitution Ave
Canberra City ACT 2601
Email: international@customs.gov.au
Website: www.customs.gov.au

FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION SECRETARIAT
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace Singapore 119616
Tel: (65) 6775-6012 Fax: (65) 6775-6013
Email: info@apec.org
Website: www.apec.org

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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan provides a series of recommendations that will assist in the development of international trade Single Window systems in APEC economies.

The Single Window vision articulated in this paper recognises the importance of international interoperability and the use of international standards as fundamental enablers for the seamless sharing of information to facilitate legitimate trade and increase supply chain security.

The Single Window Working Group (SWWG) could not have achieved the results that it has without the support of the economies that volunteered to be part of the SWWG and the efforts the economies made in answering the questionnaire that underpins this Strategic Plan and the Development Report.

The SWWG was formed in September 2006 in Viet Nam as a working group of the APEC Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP). Ten Member economies volunteered to be part of the group:

Australia	China	Korea	Philippines	United States
Canada	Japan	New Zealand	Singapore	Viet Nam

In addition the World Customs Organization (WCO), United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat and APEC Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG) have participated in the work of the SWWG.

The importance of involving a diverse range of stakeholders was emphasised at the Single Window workshop held from 16-18 April 2007 in Sydney, Australia. This event showcased an early version of the Strategic Plan and Development Report for review and comments and provided the opportunity for all participants to share their experience in investigating and developing Single Window systems.

SINGLE WINDOW WORKING GROUP DELIVERABLES 2007

Strategic Plan

This will provide a framework to support the development of national Single Windows drawing from current Single Window initiatives, experience and supporting standards.

Development Report

This will provide analysis of the questionnaire completed by APEC economies, an overview of the status of Single Window initiatives and future directions. Case studies will be used to demonstrate benefits for both business and government and best practice examples. It will identify areas where members may require or can provide assistance. The Development Report will also be a reference guide for international standards that will assist members with the implementation of Single Window. This will culminate in practical “next steps” for Single Window development in the APEC region.

WHAT IS A SINGLE WINDOW?

In investigating Single Window developments around the world, there are many different interpretations of the features and business interactions that can be included. There is no shared understanding, and it is this lack of clarity that has been explored.

A number of international approaches to Single Window have already been developed. One of the better known is the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Recommendation 33 Recommendation and Guidelines on Establishing a Single Window. The World Customs Organisation (WCO) supports this recommendation. The recommendation is easy to follow and outlines three of the most common models for a Single Window. Their definition of a Single Window is provided below and importantly provides for standardised information, using the “submit once use many times” ethos and does not restrict itself to Customs only reporting requirements.

UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33: definition of Single Window

A facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardised information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements. If information is electronic, then individual data elements should only be submitted once.

It is important to recognise the body of work that has already been undertaken and not duplicate but build on this effort. To that end the SWWG has recommended that APEC formally endorse Single Window related standards and recommendations. Furthermore, the SWWG has recommended a number of initiatives to take this important work forward within APEC beyond the term of this group.

The mandate of the SWWG concludes in June 2007 with the presentation of this Strategic Plan and the Development Report to the SCCP.

THE VISION

To develop Single Window systems that facilitate legitimate trade and enhance supply chain security in two stages:

Stage 1 - within APEC economies

Stage 2 - establishing links that enable seamless data sharing between Single Window systems through the identification and use of recognised international instruments and standards.

Working together, it is envisaged that international interoperability can be achieved within the APEC region.

THE MISSION

- To adopt a baseline of Single Window initiatives within the 21 APEC economies and document their current projects
- To adopt international standards and instruments that assist trade facilitation and supply chain security
- To identify opportunities for data sharing, capacity building, and synergies with other Single Window initiatives
- To match the capacity building needs of economies with assistance from subject matter experts in others
- To involve a wide range of public and private sector, international bodies and other sub-fora that are recognised as world experts in the area of international trade Single Window development
- To make recommendations concerning the implementation of our vision for Single Window

OUR VALUES

- Working collaboratively to build strong relationships with business and industry groups
- Encouraging partnerships between economies to foster global cooperation
- Building trust by sharing and recording experiences
- Maintaining open communication to inform and support APEC economies
- Encouraging mutual respect for each economy's operational procedures to enhance a safe and secure international supply chain

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SCCP Single Window recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** The SCCP establish a working group to further Single Window activities across APEC. The working group will engage private and public sectors, other relevant APEC sub- fora and relevant international bodies

- **Recommendation 2:** The UN/CEFACT definition of Single Window (UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33) be adopted by APEC economies

- **Recommendation 3:** The APEC economies adopt the use of internationally recognised instruments and standards in Single Window design to increase international interoperability

- **Recommendation 4:** The SCCP establish a repository to capture information regarding relevant Single Window related initiatives in international trade facilitation and supply chain security

- **Recommendation 5:** The SCCP identify and coordinate relevant capacity building Single Window activities

- **Recommendation 6:** The SCCP prepare a roadmap and implementation plan to achieve the Single Window vision.

