



ASEAN Member State flags fly at the 18th ASEAN Summit in Jakarta in 2011.

ASEAN SINGLE WINDOW

FACILITATING TRADE FOR THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

LESSONS LEARNED

PROGRESS BEGINS WITH POLITICAL COMMITMENT.

The ASW represents the commitment of economic and trade ministers, finance ministers, and heads of state to establish the NSWs and the regional architecture to connect them. That high-level commitment is the driving force for member states' participation in the ASW.

COMPETITION MOTIVATES.

Singapore's single window is one of the world's best, and other member states are keen to catch up to their fellow member states or at least not fall behind.

LIMITED FUNDING IS NOT A DEAL BREAKER.

Developing and operating a single window can cost millions of dollars and is often done through public-private partnerships. Donor funding can be used for single window design, awareness, roadmap development, and legal gap analysis to complement government and donor activities.

A REALISTIC VISION PROPELS PROGRESS.

"Regional single window" conjures thoughts of a single web portal serving all traders in the region. But such a platform is virtually impossible in the ASEAN context. Regional connectivity is more achievable and has a multiplier effect on trade facilitation, trade security, and compliance.

LOCAL SPECIALISTS CONTRIBUTE ESSENTIAL EXPERTISE.

The project used local e-commerce lawyers and firms to conduct legal gap analysis, and local firms and experts to develop software, the data set, and the ASW architecture. As a result, the region now has several local experts in ASW.

REGIONAL MEETINGS PROMOTE NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS.

There is no shortage of working groups and committees in ASEAN. But besides bringing together experts to discuss technical and legal challenges, regional meetings also enable personal relationships and strengthen regional governance.

INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP WILL DETERMINE SUSTAINABILITY.

ASW project experts provided intellectual leadership, and now ASEAN must continue to generate fresh ideas, particularly after the system goes live.

LEGAL GAP ANALYSIS GOES FIRST ON ACTION PLAN.

Drafting and amending legislation for e-commerce and a single window can be a drawn-out process. Legal analysis and writing of new legislation therefore should be given high priority in single window development.

COUNTRIES LEAD, CONSULTANTS SPEED UP THE PROCESS.

The ASW belongs to ASEAN, but because member state officials have busy schedules, ASW project consultants, with the ASEAN Secretariat and meeting chairs, conduct preparatory work between official meetings and move the process forward.

RESULTS ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY.

After the project began having positive results, ASEAN requested more project support for complementary activities, such as training on risk management, customs-business partnerships, and strategic trade management.

ASEAN leaders are committed to transforming ASEAN into a single market and production base—an economic region fully integrated into the global economy and characterized by equitable economic development—by 2015. The ASEAN Single Window (ASW) is critical to this transformation.

The ASW consists of the technical and legal systems necessary for the smooth and secure electronic exchange of trade, customs, and transport data among traders and government agencies in ASEAN. It will facilitate the flow of goods, promote the harmonization of standards and conformance procedures, streamline intra-ASEAN procedures for preferential rules-of-origin procedures, accelerate cargo release, and reduce trade transaction costs and time for ASEAN Member States. It will also facilitate ASEAN's participation in global and regional supply chains, which is imperative for the realization of the ASEAN Economic Community.

USAID SUPPORT TO ASW

From 2008 to 2013, the USAID-funded ADVANCE ASW Project helped ASEAN

- Put in place the technical components of ASW
- Design and implement a pilot project for the exchange of trade and customs data among seven member states
- Develop a legal foundation for the electronic exchange of data among member states
- Launch and support national single windows in several member states
- Start the ASW public-private consultation process
- Incorporate trade security and compliance considerations in the electronic exchange of data among member states.



ASEAN symbol of unity at ASEAN Secretariat headquarters in Jakarta.



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TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

HARMONIZED AND SECURE ELECTRONIC DATA EXCHANGE

Integrating the national single window systems of 10 member states into the ASW is technically complex, requiring careful decisions about the data and documents to be exchanged, data formats, messaging standards, communication systems, and routing mechanisms.

The ASW project contributed to the following technical aspects of establishing the ASW:

- Designed, implemented, and evaluated a pilot project involving seven member states.
- Identified, analyzed, and prioritized trade, customs, and transport data to be exchanged electronically among member states
- Analyzed the ASW's value proposition, financial feasibility, business model, governance aspects, and transition path for live implementation
- Developed the ASEAN data set, analyzing 13 cargo clearance forms to settle on common data formats for electronic exchange
- Developed two software applications for processing and exchanging ASEAN certificates of origin and customs declaration data
- Conducted workshops on business process analysis and data harmonization.



Private sector representative leads a working group discussion on prioritizing trade and customs data to be exchanged among member states through the ASW.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

PREDICTABLE, RULES-BASED ENVIRONMENT

The best electronic data exchange technology accomplishes little without a sound legal framework: Confidential information must be protected when exchanged, adequate information security standards must be implemented, data must be made available in case of dispute, and a dispute settlement mechanism must be put in place.

Without any national or regional benchmark to refer to, the ASW project helped ASEAN understand the intersection of law and technology and translate that understanding into legal agreements. The project carried out the following legal framework activities:

- Drafted a memorandum of understanding that provided basic legal coverage for the ASW pilot project
- Drafted text for a legal framework agreement on data exchange
- Developed a compendium of legal material to deepen member states' understanding of legal aspects of single windows
- Conducted workshops on the legal aspects of the ASW.



The ASW Project organized the first single window awareness workshop in Lao PDR.

SUPPORT TO NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOWS

STREAMLINED CARGO CLEARANCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

ASEAN member states had already agreed to establish national single windows and the ASW project helped some of them begin single window development:

- Helped Laos and Vietnam begin developing their single windows by raising awareness, conducting fact-finding missions, and developing a single window roadmap
- Conducted groundbreaking single window legal gap analysis in Laos, Philippines, and Vietnam
- For Lao PDR, drafted a decree establishing the national single window (pending adoption) and advised on a decree on e-transactions (enacted)
- Drafted the rule establishing the Thai national single window (pending)
- Trained Indonesian trainers on installing and operating the certificate-of-origin application.

PRIVATE SECTOR OUTREACH

TRADER-DRIVEN REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Although traders will submit data directly to national single windows, not the ASW, cross-border regulatory or commercial data exchange will affect how quickly cargo is cleared. The ASW project proposed and helped implement a private sector consultation program on the ASW. The project

- Held a regional public-private symposium on the ASW and NSWs
- Designed and developed the ASW web portal (asw.asean.org)
- Conducted a survey of the private sector and in-depth interviews in cooperation with the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council and Oracle Corporation
- Developed flyers, brochures, and booklets for trade facilitation meetings and conferences
- Developed a cargo clearance simulation to illustrate the ASW concept
- Conducted private sector roundtables on the ASW.

TRADE SECURITY

USE OF TRADE DATA TO IMPROVE COMPLIANCE

The ASW will increase the exchange of trade and customs data among ASEAN member states. To make use of such data for trade facilitation and compliance purposes, member states will have to apply risk management techniques, operate customs-business partnership programs, and have appropriate laws and regulations. The ASW project led several activities in this area:

- Conducted two regional risk management workshops on mechanisms for sharing trade and customs data
- Conducted a regional customs-business partnership workshop and a national customs-business partnership workshop in Vietnam
- Reviewed Vietnam's draft customs law and sponsored two workshops to elicit feedback from the public on the draft law
- Organized two regional workshops on strategic trade management for various government agencies
- Organized a study tour for Vietnam customs officials to learn about the U.S. authorized economic operator program and other customs-business partnerships.



Regional public-private symposium on ASW and NSWs