FROM CROSS-BORDER REGULATORY FUNCTIONS TO SINGLE WINDOW SERVICES

PART II
VOL 1
Part II

From Cross-border Regulatory Functions to Single Window Services

The Single Window operates in the area of regulation of cross-border trade. It involves a high degree of collaboration between Customs, tax authorities, trade policy administrators, security agencies and other regulatory agencies dealing with health, safety and environment. This Part brings out those relationships, and outlines the linkages between regulatory responsibilities and the services a Single Window could offer.
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MANAGING RISK FACTORS
INTEGRATION BETWEEN TRADE AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
1. Introduction

The Single Window deals with the regulation of the cross-border movement of goods, means of transport and people. It is therefore inextricably linked with the provision of border services and with taxation. Border regulatory agencies, chiefly Customs, deal with operations involving a high degree of inter-agency collaboration.

Countries differ from one another in terms of the responsibilities and functions of their border and tax authorities/agencies. The introduction of a Single Window brings with it the opportunity for each participating authority/agency to assess its current strategic responsibilities and its future role. There is a range of possible candidate services to be deployed as part of the Single Window. For example, Customs administrations must assess the impact of a Single Window on their traditional functions. As each agency reviews its current role, a clear picture will emerge as to the strategic path it must follow in the Single Window approach.

1.1 Relationship to Other Parts of the Compendium

Part I of Volume 1 introduced the concept of the Single Window and described several possible approaches. It concluded, among other things, that a Single Window fundamentally changes the way in which Customs and other cross-border regulatory agencies (CBRAs) provide services to economic operators in the trade and transport sector, and calls for a collaborative effort amongst CBRAs.

Border agencies and tax authorities must come together to implement a Single Window. In this Part, we will analyse in detail the various functions of Customs, tax authorities and other border agencies, and the implications such functions have for services in a Single Window environment. Based on a strategic understanding of the role of Customs among all agencies/authorities, Part III of Volume 1 explains how a Single Window fits within the overall concept of Customs modernization. This analysis will also provide information to help identify the scope of the Single Window project. Scoping will result in the creation of a strategic business case (Part I of Volume 2). It will also help key executives from the participating agencies/authorities to consider the scope of the Single Window within their respective political, legal, administrative and technical environments (covered in different Parts of Volume 1).

2. Customs, Taxation and Border Services

It is widely recognized that Customs plays a vital economic and security role, including in managing the international supply chain, providing social protection, maintaining streams of revenue, and generating valuable statistics for policy making. While Customs can potentially perform many functions, the actual profile of responsibilities varies by country. Its critical role in taxation and border services needs to be understood within the overall framework of economic and border management. This will help in assessing the impact of the Single Window on different Customs functions, the services associated with these roles and offered as part of the Single Window, and the
tasks for cross-agency co-ordination and collaboration. Not every Customs administration has these functional roles. Some roles may not carry the same priority for Customs as they would for other agencies of government.

Figure 1: Functions performed by cross-border regulatory agencies are closely linked to Single Window services.

Additionally, there are some roles which may not be listed as functions performed by Customs or another participating agency, even though these are related to border management. The following checklist can help elicit a more nuanced understanding of the functional profile of all authorities/agencies. The checklist can be completed by each participating government agency. Figure 2 below illustrates how a Customs administration can map its role against specific functions using the well-known RACI matrix:
Figure 2: RACI matrix mapping Customs’ role in respect of each action or project component in a Single Window environment.

In addition to the above, an administration can grade each function in terms of priority – ‘High’, ‘Medium’ or ‘Low’. To illustrate, and to explain how this checklist can be used, a few of the key functions are assigned a priority in the table below:

Table 1: Example of how the RACI matrix can be used to show the respective roles of different cross-border regulatory agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Service</th>
<th>Customs</th>
<th>Trade Ministry</th>
<th>Transport Ministry</th>
<th>Interior Ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vessel clearance services</td>
<td>Responsible (Medium)</td>
<td>Not Involved</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Responsible (Medium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-intrusive inspection services</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Informed (Low)</td>
<td>Responsible (Medium)</td>
<td>Responsible (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container tracking</td>
<td>Responsible (High)</td>
<td>Consulted (Low)</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Consulted (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs broker licensing</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Consulted (Medium)</td>
<td>Informed (Low)</td>
<td>Informed (Low)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEO accreditation</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Consulted (High)</td>
<td>Informed (Low)</td>
<td>Consulted (Medium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import licensing</td>
<td>Responsible (High)</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Not Involved</td>
<td>Informed (Medium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export certification</td>
<td>Consulted (High)</td>
<td>Accountable (High)</td>
<td>Not Involved</td>
<td>Not Involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 What are Functional Services?

Governments make laws and regulations governing international trade, and businesses must comply with them. These statutes also lay down the authorities, powers and resources to facilitate/enforce compliance. The regulatory procedures derived from the statutes establish the routines for trade and officials. These routines may be seen as discrete interactions between officials and business, with each side fulfilling its formal obligations.

Looking beyond these routines and formal administrative procedures, cross-border regulatory agencies (CBRAs) should appreciate that businesses are their external customers, and are the primary focus of their actions. Regulatory compliance is advanced by developing and sustaining relations with trade. Likewise, CBRA officials should have the means with which to perform their functions. These officials and their organizational units are the internal customers. A service relationship is established between the CBRAs and their internal and external customers.

A Single Window environment needs to be understood in terms of ‘services’ and ‘interactions’. CBRAs deliver functional services which can be categorized into information services, checkpoint services, counter services, compliance services, and enforcement services. At a high level, these services appear quite generic. However, variations emerge between different agencies and different processes as one looks more closely at levels of detail. Specifically, differences surface during the exploration phase and while carrying out the functional assessment, which will be crucial in designing a business-centric service experience. Annex I provides a detailed example of how Qatar successfully developed its Single Window solution ‘Al Nadeeb’, which performs multiple functions for a large number of government agencies.

Figure 3: Example of functional services in a Single Window.
There are six areas which this Compendium has identified as forming part of a Single Window: (i) safety, health and environment, (ii) transportation and logistics, (iii) revenue administration, (iv) trade policy administration, (v) protection of the economy, and (vi) supply-chain security. Regulatory functions are based on legislation and must be performed by regulatory authorities. When performed through the Single Window, these functions provide opportunities for collaboration and/or integration.

Figure 4: Logical link between legislative areas, regulatory functions and Single Window services, reflecting close collaboration in service design, development and delivery.

3. Revenue Administration

The supply of goods in domestic and international trade may involve the collection of Customs duties, VAT, and other taxes on commodities. Customs administrations in many countries are involved in, or closely associated with, the national revenue collection effort and are being called upon to co-operate more closely with tax administrators.

The WCO has produced the Revenue Package, which is a significant knowledge product in this area. The Package brings together existing WCO instruments that can help the administration to protect tax revenues and improve tax compliance. The WCO has also published ‘Guidelines for strengthening cooperation and the exchange of information between Customs and tax authorities at the national level’.
3.1 Customs and Tax in a Single Window Environment

It is of vital importance that Customs and tax authorities work together and have established mechanisms to do so. The Guidelines highlight “some overarching principles and associated benefits concerning enhancement of Customs-Tax co-operation”. The Guidelines also suggest that governments must innovate based on their organizational structure, needs and operational requirements.

This Section focuses on co-operation between Customs and tax authorities in a Single Window environment. Customs and tax are closely intertwined in an economy, and those links are illustrated in the following diagram:

![Figure 5: Role of Customs and tax in the circular flow model of the economy.](image)

The above figure depicts how Customs functions as a sentry, watching over financial and merchandise flows. However, the most critical function that Customs and tax authorities perform is the control on the flow of value through the economy. Assuming that goods and services flow through the economy both between businesses, and between businesses and consumers, Customs and tax authorities – by virtue of their regulatory functions – can access information in respect of each **industry value chain** to detect areas where tax is being evaded.
Using data from tax returns, VAT credit flows and Customs declarations, it is possible to construct elaborate industry value chains. The missing pieces or gaps in the value chain will help in detecting and eliminating tax fraud.

Close co-operation between Customs and tax authorities means that trade can look forward to a seamless interface with them. Firstly, the shared use of business identification numbers between the two government agencies in the context of a Single Window creates the basis for the seamless flow of credit of VAT paid, and for the transfer of information from Customs to tax authorities on importer obligations in respect of domestic tax. Likewise, zero-rating of VAT in respect of goods exported is contingent upon the presentation by trade of the proof of export of goods. Such proof is available in the Single Window, which tax authorities could access to automatically process the trader’s VAT credits and dues.

3.2 Key Functions

- Assess and collect duties, taxes and fees on goods that cross the border (for example, Fig.9 in country A, Role ➔ ‘Accountable’).
» Participate effectively in ensuring that value added tax, excise or other domestic taxes are collected on goods that cross the border (for example, **Role**→ ‘**Accountable**’).

» In relation to Customs valuation, facilitate the correct tax treatment of transnational transfer payments (for example, **Role**→ ‘**Not concerned**’).

» Resolve and settle revenue and other regulatory disputes expeditiously and equitably.

» Analyse legally obtained data from different sources to profile taxpayers to discover revenue opportunities.

### 3.3 Possible Single Window Services

**Provide online information services concerning:**

» All types of duties, taxes and fees payable at the border for every commodity/tariff item (for example, **Priority**→ ‘**High**’).

» Computation method for each type of duty, tax and fee covering not only Customs, but also in respect of other legislation.

» Legal/regulatory authority for the charges and basis of tariff.

» Guidance on tariff classification for commodities. Starting from the description of a product in common parlance, the economic operator should be able to ascertain the HS nomenclature.

» Based on, for example, tariff classification, country of origin or intended end use, guidance on the precise steps involved in the import, export or transit of goods, covering pre-arrival and pre-departure formalities, clearance formalities and post-clearance formalities. The service should also include prerequisites.

» Provide a facility to receive import, export and transit declarations online.

» Online validation and processing of notifications.

» Online calculation and finalization of cross-border duties and taxes.

» Online, real-time assessment of risk, selectivity for inspection and clearance.

» Electronic work-flow for processing release and clearance.

» Online application for cross-border duties, taxes and fee liabilities.

» E-payment of all duties taxes and fees – also refunds and drawback.

» Collection of domestic commodity taxes payable on imported goods.

» Administration of duty/tax rebates and duty-drawbacks upon export.

» Management of in-bond movements.

» Management of obligations regarding deferments and reconciliation.
Sharing of real-time information with internal tax authorities on tax liability of imported goods.

Case management portal to monitor and manage disputes arising out of the enforcement of border regulation.

Dispute settlement lifecycle processes: (i) provide procedural information on how dispute resolution works with each of the regulatory agencies; (ii) issue dispute notices; (iii) fix appointments for the proceedings; (iv) notify adjudicated decisions.

Provide information on service continuity measures in the event of failure of online transaction systems.

3.4 Tasks of Inter-agency Co-ordination

Inter-agency co-ordination functions stem not just from Single Window services, but also from policy formulation. The following tasks have been identified with regard to revenue administration services:

- Locate every regulatory agency that collects a duty, tax, fee or charge for border procedures. These may be central, federal or provincial agencies, or local authorities.
- Examine different industry sectors – each may have its own type or structure of regulatory taxation. For example, the oil industry may have a duty or fee schedule which is entirely distinct from that of the agriculture sector.
- Consult trade and transport sector associations and their intermediaries (brokers) – these parties are always acutely aware of the various types of expenses.
- Compile information about the types of levies (duties taxes and fees) and the underlying legislation from all border agencies. Include even those taxes that are unique to the country, region or provinces/ports.
- Collaborate with partner organizations to build profiles for each type of duty, tax or fee to capture: (i) computation method, (ii) assessment and valuation method (iii) payment method, (iv) tax accounting, (v) security and deferment facilities (along with conditions for deferment), (vi) exemptions from taxes (along with conditions for exemption), and (vii) post-release reconciliation.
- Create standing organizational structures (committees, working groups) to ensure that all new border-related tariffs for duties taxes and fees, and changes to existing tariffs, are reported adequately in advance to the Single Window operating organization.
- Co-ordinate with border infrastructure providers to report fees for different types of services. In collaboration with the domestic commodity taxation agencies, create an enabling environment for the assessment and collection of national taxes on imported goods.
- Document the conditions for collection or deferment of goods and services taxes at the border.
- Co-operate with corporate taxation authorities on the investigation of transfer payments between related parties, and support Customs valuation research through such co-operation.
- Co-ordinate with all relevant border regulatory agencies to put together information on disputes and case management. Respond to disputes in a comprehensive manner by clarifying which administrative authority is to decide on disputes.
Create mechanisms collaboratively by sharing of data and by analysis of industry value chains intended to locate hidden revenue opportunities.

Monitor, track and analyse industry value chains.

Institutionalize the sharing of tax compliance profiles between agencies.

Collaboratively manage privacy concerns that may arise in the exchange of data between agencies.

4. Transportation and Logistics

4.1 Key Functions

Participate in the creation and management of border infrastructure (for example, Customs, with role ‘Consulted’).

Ensure quick, safe and orderly movement of means of transport, by promptly providing logistics services and efficiently collecting service fees.

Ensure efficient and orderly unloading/loading of containers and cargo at ports and airports.

Ensure that storage, inspections, screening and examination take place in safe and secure facilities, and delivery takes place with minimal disruption to the flow of cargo and at the least cost to trade.

Ensure that bonded cargo is securely held in the warehouses or under transportation.

Ensure that means of transport used in cross-border activities meet regulatory requirements.

4.2 Possible Single Window Services

Provide online information to traders and transporters regarding:

Access and approach to ports, airports and land crossings.

Location of warehouses, terminals, cargo services and regulatory (e.g. Customs/quarantine) facilities; and

For each facility, provide a list of services, service hours, service levels and service fees.

Electronic handling of cargo delivery orders, transport orders, appointment-based drop-offs, and pick-up services.

User self-service at cargo and container terminal gates. Automated terminal gates.

Provide Single Window electronic facility for filing conveyance report, enabling entry and exit clearance formalities for Customs and other regulatory agencies.

Enable the sharing of electronic information on means of transport with the relevant statutory authority, through the Single Window (registration and certification).

Common referencing for the stay of means of transport (unique stay reference numbers) across all participating agencies so that duplication of information is avoided.
Sharing of vessel profiles and voyage details, arrival schedules, and berthing information among border agencies.

Single point collection of passenger and crew lists, dangerous goods information and vessel security reports.

Single point service for identification and credentialization of logistics personnel who will have access to different secure facilities within the border infrastructure.

Provide online services that guide traffic through the land, air and sea facilities at the frontier (navigation, terminal gate control).

Provide real-time waiting time and queuing information.

Establish online exchange of the Customs response to conveyance reports with traffic controllers at the border.

Provide Single Window services to deal with the allocation of loading and unloading bays/berths, scheduling of cargo operations, regulatory inspections and other services indicated for the purpose of conveyance call.

Provide Single Window services to deal with the licensing of bonded storage and handling facilities.

Provide Single Window service to manage binning and storage locations of cargo and to enable safe storage, retrieval and examination of cargo. The storage place of cargo should be visible to the identified stakeholders.

Provide access to cargo manifest data to all relevant warehouse operators to enable temporary storage and inventory keeping of in-bond cargo.

Provide online registration service for enrolling and retiring means of transport.

4.3 Tasks of Inter-agency Co-ordination

Logistics is largely the responsibility of transport authorities and private sector players. Inter-agency co-ordination functions, whether initiated by Customs or by transport authorities, could stem from any of the following issues:

Co-ordination during the construction and management of border infrastructure.

During the design and development phase, specific Customs requirements for space and equipment need to be factored in. This is linked to the suitability of the facility as a Customs bonding service/Authorized Economic Operator status for the airport operator.

In the operational phase of the logistics facility, collaboration with transport authorities and private sector players to align business processes and working hours, etc.

Co-ordination with controllers of road and rail, air traffic and shipping to ensure the security of incoming and outgoing means of transport.

Partnering with security agencies in securing border facilities. In particular, perimeter security of border facilities and cargo security are vital for cargo clearance operations.

Co-operation on entry, exit and access of personnel to and from sensitive installations.
» Collaboration with traffic controllers to establish joint operational control centres to enable Customs to exercise control of traffic flows and to facilitate interception of traffic for routine or exceptional examination.

» Promotion of real-time sharing of conveyance release information with other regulatory agencies to enable smooth flow of traffic.

» Developing a formal inter-agency emergency response procedure and disaster recovery plan for airport, sea port, and land border facilities. Establishing an emergency preparedness chain of command.

» Co-ordination with cargo handlers to work out the physical aspects of the smooth release of cargo.

» Collaboration with border agencies to regulate bonded storage and handling facilities. Licensing of these establishments often requires the approval of multiple agencies. Such approval processes should be co-ordinated and synchronized among the relevant agencies.

» Regulation of fixed/mobile facilities and equipment to operate in the bonded area, which may require general Customs oversight.

» Co-ordination with security agencies on service vehicles moving in and out of the secure facilities at an airport. Such vehicles require Customs control to prevent connivance/collusion.

» Co-ordination with port authorities to register tugs and pilot vessels or feeder vessels that are intended solely to handle cargo from mother ships, where these ships are also required to be registered/licensed by Customs for operations in the Customs area.

» Collaboration with warehouse and logistics operators to facilitate examinations and share control results. Co-ordination with store operators, security agencies and local police to prevent and control pilferage and smuggling from warehouses.

» Co-ordination with transportation standards bodies to share and manage information on ocean-going and coastal vessels, registered scheduled and non-scheduled flights, and designated commercial means of transport authorized to ply on international road routes.

» Agreement on the agency that maintains data on the registration and certification of modes of transport.

5. Trade Policy Administration

5.1 Key Functions

» Periodically review and help fine-tune trade policy measures, including tariff and non-tariff trade measures, and trade facilitation programmes.

» Implement Customs measures concerning bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements, and agreements on economic co-operation.

» Monitor the business environment, trade costs, and cargo release times.
» Provide accurate business data to support trade policy development.

5.2 Possible Single Window Services

» Provide an online Single Window portal that provides tariff and non-tariff trade measures for all tariff lines and commodities.
» Provide a Single Window service to all regulatory agencies for delivering trade data and statistics.
» Provide online services for the application of import and export licences, and permits.
» Provide transactional and post-release verification of licences, permits and certificates.
» Provide online services to implement individual trade regimes as required by RTAs.

5.3 Tasks of Inter-agency Co-ordination

» Collaborate with the Trade Ministry to reach agreement on the role of each CBRA in maintaining online information.
» Collaborate with the Trade Department during trade negotiations to present a cogent national position on border measures.
» Co-ordinate with the Trade Ministry to secure effective implementation of Customs measures at borders, including measures for trade facilitation.

6. Protection of the Economy

6.1 Key Functions

» Prevent misuse of trade and travel for the illegal movement of money across borders.
» Implement legitimate measures for protection against dumping, and other countervailing measures.
» Promote flows of investment by meeting industry needs for supply chain facilitation.
» Ensure that counterfeit articles (including counterfeit currency) do not reach markets to the detriment of genuine holders of IPR.
» Protect the economy against base erosion and profit shifting, and prevent illegal financial flows through the trading route.

6.2 Possible Single Window Services

» Provide an online facility for currency declarations by travellers.
» Provide online information on countervailing and protective duties.
» Provide online information on trade and supply chain facilitation measures and other investment promotion measures.
» Provide linkages between the Single Window for international commerce and other Single Windows or online e-government services for businesses.
» Provide an online facility for right-holders to register their IPR.

6.3 Tasks of Inter-agency Co-ordination

» Collaborate with other enforcement agencies that are authorized to take action against money laundering.
» Collaborate with Financial Intelligence Units to implement measures against trade-related money laundering.
» Co-ordinate with the competent agencies to help investigate commodities that require anti-dumping and protective duties.
» Collaborate with other public bodies to provide a comprehensive package for potential investors.
» Collaborate with other government agencies to align and simplify business life-cycle processes.
» Collaborate with right-holders help report goods susceptible to IPR violations.
» Inform other government agencies about the detection of IPR infringements.

7. Public Health, Safety and Environment

7.1 Key Functions

» Implement admissibility (prohibitions), restrictions (licences, permits) and other border measures for goods concerning consumer and industrial safety, environment and public health.
» Prevent and defeat drug trafficking and human trafficking.
» Implement regulations on the movement of hazardous waste.
» Stem the flow of illegal trade in wildlife.

7.2 Possible Single Window Services

» Provide online information about goods that pose safety, environmental or public health hazards.
» Implement an ‘integrated declaration’ for submitting information for clearance of goods, importation, exportation and transit.
» Provide a system to automatically refer items in cross-border shipments to the respective border agencies in the event that such goods require clearance, documentary checks, examination, etc.
Provide for a facility to implement risk-based selectivity on behalf of other agencies for documentary verification, inspection and testing.

Provide for a service to capture supporting documents in dematerialized form.

Provide for licences, certificates, permits and other authorization issued by other agencies to be handled online.

Provide online information about narcotic and psychotropic substances and their respective controls.

Provide for electronic reporting of regulatory information concerning handling and movement of hazardous waste (Basel Convention).

Figure 7: International instruments where border agencies have responsibilities.

Typically, border agencies are responsible for implementing prohibitions and restrictions, etc. and perform controls based on national legislation. The Single Window becomes relevant in defining how these services are implemented, and can even be central to that task. The following schematic explains the processes related to the application of controls, starting with international conventions and going through to service delivery via the Single Window.
7.3 Tasks of Inter-agency Co-ordination

- Collaborate with regulatory agencies to provide information to traders on admissibility and border measures.
- Collaborate with public health authorities to implement border measures so that trade and travel do not pose a danger to human and animal health.
- Collaborate with law-enforcement officials on prevention of drug trafficking.
- Collaborate with the agencies concerned to obtain certification of port facilities for handling hazardous waste.

An example of Inter-agency Co-ordination from European Union

The European Commission offers Customs administrations of the EU Member States an “EU Customs Single Window: Certificates Exchange” solution. This solution allows the Customs IT systems of Member States to connect with the EU certificates’ databases through a unique entry point in the DG TAXUD IT infrastructure. Currently, this connection is enabled using the TRAde Control and Expert System (TRACES) database. However, it is planned to expand its scope to other EU certificates’ databases. The solution allows EU Customs authorities to automatically validate, directly at the source database, a number of health entry documents that form part of the Customs clearance process, thus reducing the administrative burden on trade. The European Commission is working on expanding the scope to include additional certificates. Further developments on the implementation of the EU SW environment for Customs, including a possible legal initiative, are
also being studied. A Customs 2020 Project Group composed of 19 MS and 6 traders’ federations has been set up to this purpose.

8. Supply Chain Security

8.1 Key Functions

» Ensure that critical facilities at the border remain protected from misuse by rogue players.
» Implement border measures (inspection, scanning, vehicle rummaging) to prevent the movement of arms, ammunitions, explosives and WMDs.
» Implement programmes about strategic goods and the export control of dual-use items.
» Implement passenger control processes to stop transnational crime, including smuggling and terrorism.
» Implement programmes to provide assurance that supply-chain players and facilities are trusted and secure.

8.2 Possible Single Window Services

» Provide online information on licensing of dual-use equipment and technologies.
» Provide online information to citizens concerning Customs and border controls.
» Provide an online filing facility for passenger manifests.
» Implement passenger profiling and risk assessment using passenger data.

8.3 Tasks of Inter-agency Co-ordination

» Collaborate with security agencies, as necessary, for monitoring, detection and post-screening of Customs violations activities with security implications (and vice versa).
» Collaborate with coastal and land border security agencies to help optimize resources used for routine border surveillance.
» Work with the security agencies at the border to apprehend people suspected of terrorism and serious crime.
» Partner with enforcement agencies to share intelligence and to enhance controls.
» Collaborate with partner agencies for the implementation of supply chain security programmes.

Not all Customs services will have the same set of priorities. Some functions will be ascribed greater importance than others. Priorities change over time, building a Single Window environment may stretch as much as 20-years, and the evolution of regulatory functions in time will require a continues review and update of provided services.
Accordingly, even though country A and country B may have entirely different priorities, sovereign responsibilities will remain with border management agencies in both countries. The scope of border regulations and workloads may vary over time, and associated functions will become prominent at different times in the operation of a Single Window.

This has implications for architects that are considering Single Window solutions. The architects of the Single Window must provide for the possibility of adding the necessary functional features as the profile of the country develops.

9. Conclusion

This Part illustrates that, by their very nature, the functions of border agency administration involve intensive collaboration with other government agencies. Whether or not Customs implements a Single Window, it is required to engage closely with a number of government agencies and with the private sector to fulfil its roles, goals and mission. The World Customs Organization has recognized this unique challenge for Customs in the future, identifying ‘co-ordinated border management’ as an essential building block for Customs in the 21st century.

There is a logical connection between ‘border agency functions,’ ‘Single Window services’ and ‘areas of inter-agency co-operation’. However, as noted, not all Customs administrations share the same profile of responsibilities. The traditional allocation of tasks among government departments, the historical role played by Customs as a public service, and the strategic role ascribed to it by the political leadership, may vary across geographies and economies. The self-assessment framework provided in this Part may be used to quickly establish an accurate map of functions that are nationally mandated to a Customs administration. This functional map may then help identify the
portfolio of services (‘collection of inter-related services’) to be delivered through the Single Window environment.

The desire to perform and excel in these services must fit in with the overall strategic map of the Customs administration, an aspect which is discussed in Part III of Volume 1. Inter-agency coordination tasks are far more complex than the technical and engineering aspects of building the Single Window environment. As Customs engages with other agencies on different aspects of coordination, it will need the continued support of policy leaders. Part IV of Volume 1 discusses the ways in which such support can be secured, and policy momentum maintained.

Annex I: Al Nadeeb – Qatar’s Multi-functional Single Window

(Note: The following draws on information in an article which appeared in the February 2014 issue (No. 73) of WCO News, by Dr. Waiel Said, E-Government Portfolio Director, Qatar Customs, and on information on the website http://www.customs.gov.qa/eng/QCCSW.php.)

Qatar introduced its Single Window ‘Al Nadeeb’ after a careful study of the strategic and operational role of Customs and the functional requirements of some government agencies/ministries. While the main goal was to review and improve all Customs operations and procedures, building an integrated community ready to work via a Single Window electronic system which conforms to international and regional standards also facilitated a number of regulatory functions. Qatar has been able to integrate all government agencies and the private sector involved in Customs procedures through the Single Window. The Single Window has also reduced time spent on cargo clearance and inspection rates to a matter of minutes, and plays a key role in facilitating trade, promoting economic growth and ensuring Qatar’s national security. The project has also helped improve staff and technological capabilities to reduce times in finalizing Customs clearance procedures. The following figure illustrates the wide range of cross-border regulatory agencies whose functions are covered by Al Nadeeb.
Figure 10: The wide range of functions covered by Al Nadeeb, the Qatar Single Window.

In a bid to provide the State of Qatar with one of the world’s most efficient, reliable and trustworthy Customs clearance services, the Qatar Customs Clearance Single Window, an automated system known as Al Nadeeb, was officially launched in the country during September 2013, in order to provide better communication and integration with the trade community.

In the past, Qatar’s Customs clearance process was long and laborious, with a 100% physical inspection approach which caused significant delays at border crossings, ports and airports. Qatar Customs believes that the new system will assist it in achieving a prestigious global business ranking, while spearheading the enhancement of Customs laws and regulations for the greater trade community. Al Nadeeb will, therefore, ensure that Qatar is able to trade more efficiently internationally by delivering competent, transparent and reliable trade services.

Al Nadeeb was developed to improve the clearance process by simplifying current procedures into a highly efficient systematic process. The introduction of the system and its superior capabilities in processing declarations will enhance Customs’ reputation with the public, airlines, airports and other important stakeholders.

Managing Risk Factors

The system will assist in reducing risk factors that are present in the import and export process by utilizing the robust features put in place for declaration submission, online payment and enhanced Customs inspection, as well as auto-routing of the declaration to the relevant government agency. Al Nadeeb is an intelligence-enabled risk management framework with systematic application of management procedures and practices that provide Customs with the necessary information to address movements or consignments that present a risk.
With this holistic risk-based selective system, Qatar Customs will be able to focus resources on high-risk areas, while increasing the productivity of the clearance process for low-risk shipments. The automated process will build risk profiles, which can then be consistently applied to all imports and exports, and is significantly faster and more accurate in comparing a given set of data against all currently active risk profiles that can easily be kept up to date.

Integration Between Trade and Government Agencies

Al Nadeeb has been integrated with trading communities and other government agencies to benefit the entire trade community in the State of Qatar, as well as internationally, as highlighted below:

Ministry of Interior: Al Nadeeb ensures seamless electronic integration with the Ministry, which is responsible for immigration, drugs prevention, traffic and civil defence. The system enables national security and all other areas of concern to be protected, by providing accurate and immediate information on companies and restricted goods and their movements in and out of Qatar.

Ministry of Business and Trade: To safeguard Qatar’s import and export processes, it is vital that Al Nadeeb matches a company’s importing activity with its registration, including the validation of a transaction date.

Trading community and clearing agents: Al Nadeeb has made it possible for traders and clearing agents to pay duties and submit declarations online, as well as for traders to authorize clearing agents electronically and to follow up on the status of their declarations 24/7.

Other government authorities: Qatar Customs co-ordinates and co-operates with approximately 17 different government agencies that control goods, to ensure that imported and exported goods comply with the laws and regulations of Qatar. Al Nadeeb communicates automatically with the relevant authority, enabling automated decision-making in respect of approvals, rejections or conditional releases.

Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Free Trade Zone: As part of the agreement with the GCC, Al Nadeeb facilitates synergy with all GCC ports by providing them with instant information on imports and exports, thereby keeping them in the loop to ensure smooth transfers between relevant ports.