



Nigeria develops an organic National Single Window

As part of the transformation agenda of the President of Nigeria, H.E. Dr. Ebele Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has been pursuing a six-point agenda, diligently being implemented by NCS Comptroller-General, Abdullahi Dikko Inde, aimed at building the capacity of NCS and its trade stakeholders and enhancing the manner in which Nigeria conducts its cross-border trade.

International trade is a key component in the expansion of the Nigerian economy, and NCS intends to facilitate this process by making it cheaper and quicker to conduct cross-border trade through the introduction of a National Single Window (NSW). To develop an innovative NSW that promotes efficient trade, improves safety and security, and increases revenue, NCS adopted a holistic approach that includes all regulatory, financial, transport, logistics and commercial procedures in its scope.

Recognizing the need for technical expertise in this area, NCS partnered with Single Window (SW) experts, namely West Blue Consulting, to conduct a feasibility study (including a gap/needs analysis and a proof of concept) in February 2012 for the NSW programme focused not only on Customs functions, but on all procedures relating to the global trade supply chain – the UN/CEFACT Buy-Ship-Pay Model.

The UN/CEFACT Buy-Ship-Pay Model describes the main processes and parties in the international supply chain, which ensures that goods are ordered, shipped and paid for while complying with regulatory requirements and supporting trade security. The Model identifies key commercial, logistical, regulatory and payment procedures involved in the international supply chain and provides an overview of the information exchanged between the parties throughout its various steps.

Approach

As each country has its own unique trade environment, it was important to understand Nigeria's trade supply chain strengths, weaknesses and priorities, to ensure an effective, organic development approach to Nigeria's SW environment as opposed to a 'copy and paste' approach. The aim of the NSW programme was to establish the current baseline benchmarked to international standards, identify areas that require strengthening, and build capacity and awareness in NCS and among key stakeholders in order to formulate a master plan and a road map – a solid foundation – for the implementation of a NSW.

One major objective of the programme was institutional development, combined with the empowerment of the workforce. Therefore, to ensure effective knowledge transfer and to strengthen the workforce

capacity of NCS and other stakeholders, the SW experts worked very closely with members of the established working group on all aspects and phases of the feasibility study, in order to build a solid foundation for the future.

According to the UNESCAP/UNECE Single Window Implementation Guide, the first level of maturity in SW implementations involves a 'paperless Customs' including e-payment for Customs duty, an e-container loading list and electronic risk-based inspection. Nigeria achieved the first level of maturity in the implementation of its NSW with the introduction by NCS of the electronic submission of Single Goods Declarations (SGDs).

Master plan focus areas

Business processes and data harmonization:

The business process analysis and data harmonization work reviewed the 'as-is' situation and came up with better 'to-be' processes, a business process model, and a NSW data set based on the WCO Data Model (Version 3.3) and its implementation recommendations. A business process manual was also created for the trading community – the first of its kind in Nigeria.

Information and communications technology (ICT):

ICT enables efficient and secure electronic processing of SW services to be rendered. As there is no 'one size fits all' solution for a SW, the feasibility study reviewed the 'as-is' and designed the most appropriate ICT architecture for Nigeria's NSW.

Stakeholder relations and change management:

These two key disciplines are interlinked and are perhaps the most important part of every successful SW implementation. Several consultation sessions were conducted, resulting in recommendations for stakeholder relations and change management. The critical task of continuous sensitization of all stakeholders is being achieved through the use of newsletters,

workshops and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, in order to provide updates on developments in the SW programme.

Legal, institutional and governance framework:

One of the key components underpinning a SW is the existence of an appropriate legal, institutional and governance framework that provides for effective management, sustainability, certainty, trust, security and privacy of transactions in the exchange of information via a SW mechanism, whether electronic or otherwise. Based on an analysis of the environment and the cost-benefit analysis, this component of the programme provided recommendations and a roadmap for the implementation of a sustainable and legal environment.

Solutions

Working with world class technical partners on the 'to-be' business processes designed for the NSW, the web-based Nigeria Trade Hub was developed as part of the programme, as a means of facilitating trade and increasing transparency, where all information relating to trade from the various involved agencies is aggregated under one roof and is readily available to be searched and viewed.

A non-restrictive online portal – www.nigeriatraderhub.gov.ng – was launched on 19 August 2013 by the Minister of Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga, providing information and guidance for international trade business processors in the areas of import, export and transit trade. Key features of the portal include a classification tool, a contact directory, a document library, a currency converter, a Customs procedure code search, a procedures and document simulation tool, a market place and relevant trade news.

The NSW proof of concept – www.nigerianationalsinglewindow.gov.ng/sw – was also developed with five stakeholders, namely the NCS, the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and

Control, the National Environmental Standard and Regulation Enforcement Agency, the Standard Organization of Nigeria, the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service, and terminal operators where traders, with a single submission of data (in line with UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33), can obtain all relevant permits and certificates needed to import products into Nigeria.

The first phase of the electronic risk-based inspection system's Pre-Arrival Assessment Report (PAAR) – www.ncspaar.gov.ng – has been developed to enable NCS to have an end-to-end environment of the risk assessment and inspection processes via operational content and pre-clearance risk analysis profiles. With PAAR utilizing a common classification tool with the Nigeria Trade Hub, transparency and trader compliance has been enhanced.

NSW roadmap

The proposed roadmap for the implementation of the NSW is based on different maturity levels in the SW evolution. This model has five steps:

- Paperless Customs
- Regulatory SW
- Logistics SW
- Fully integrated SW
- Cross-border SW

Nigeria is currently at the first step of the model, namely the paperless Customs phase. Its ambition is to implement a fully integrated SW by 2018, and to achieve a 50% improvement in its position in the World Bank Trading Across Borders Rankings by 2015. To reach these goals requires the introduction of a holistic SW and the implementation of the necessary Customs, regulatory, logistics and commercial procedures, as well as the commitment of all stakeholders to the vision.

More information

<http://westblueconsulting.co.uk>