

Qatar's Single Window system continues to deliver improved results

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 September 2013 to deliver better communication and integration with the trade community. This article focuses on the system's recent and future developments.

AL NADEEB, WHICH was first deployed at the port of Doha, has lately been deployed at a major land port on the border with Saudi Arabia, as well as at Qatar's express courier terminal. As shown in Table 1, as

the system is rolled-out, and more transactions processed, the average clearance time is decreasing. The system has also been improved to provide a better user interface and new value-added services.

Table 1

Data period	Finalized declarations	Registered users	Average clearing time	Ports of entry
2011*	15,201	12,731	11 days and 5 hours	1
2012*	130,347	15,133	3 days and 17 hours	2
2013	336,936	37,630	2 days and 12 hours	3
2014	543,469	31,821	1 day and 16 hours	5
Total	1,025,953	97,315		11

*Data gathered during the pilot run in 2011 and 2012

New deployments

Abu Samra land port

Qatar's only land border crossing sees a steady stream of lorries, full of construction materials and food, rumble across the border from Saudi Arabia every day. Other than liquefied natural gas and petroleum, the country produces very little. A substantial portion of Qatar's imports – mainly consumer and industrial goods – arrive from UAE ports or on trucks through Abu Samra.

About 800 trucks pass through the crossing each day and thousands of passenger vehicles enter and exit the country around the clock, making it one of

the busiest ports of entry in the country. This substantial flow of goods and people has historically created a bottleneck at the border. However, since the implementation of Al Nadeeb at Abu Samra in July 2014, Qatari Customs has been able to ensure faster clearance times for goods and eased the process for travellers.

Express couriers

An automated electronic clearance process has been introduced to clear express courier shipments at Doha International Airport, resulting in rapid turnaround times for the clearance of shipments, as well as a reduced dependency on human input.



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New functionalities

Mobile application

Due to the extensive use of mobile devices by the clearing agent community and all users of Al Nadeeb, and the consequent strong demand for a mobile application, a mobile version of the system has been developed. It provides full system functionality and a streamlined user experience, as well as a highly-developed user interface.

e-AWB

Since the beginning of 2014, the adoption of the electronic air waybill (e-AWB) developed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which replaces paper air waybills, has been steadily on the rise around the world, with more and more industry participants taking it on board and adopting it.

Al Nadeeb enables airlines to submit an e-AWB for shipments originating and transiting through Doha, as well as for import shipments into Doha. The adoption of the e-AWB is not only another significant step towards a paperless system within the air cargo process, but has also resulted in:

- leaner and smoother procedures;
- the elimination of the transport, handling and archiving of paper AWBs, including the associated cost savings;

- greater data accuracy;
- stricter confidentiality.

The way forward

Qatar Customs has committed to reforming and enhancing its existing processes through the development of Al Nadeeb, which is in line with the QATAR 2030 national vision and the country's Digital Inclusion Strategy for a fully e-government. These reforms will address the rising demand from the trading community for an easier Customs clearance process, and also cater to Qatar Customs' plans to offer new value-added services.

Al Nadeeb already allows traders and clearing agents to pay duties and submit declarations online. Traders are also able to authorize clearing agencies online, and to follow up on the status of their Customs declarations 24/7.

Moreover, the system displays real-time information which enables shipments to be tracked while providing up-to-date revenue data, thus facilitating the monitoring of import and export costs. There is also a Call Centre providing 24/7 customer service. In addition, users are able to access a personal smart card to monitor all their import/export movements.

The new services to be added in the coming months will include the following key functionalities:

1) Customized reporting

Al Nadeeb will provide customized trade reports to the business community and government agencies/ministries currently participating in the system. The reports will cover, for example, import/export volumes, the amount of duties paid, payment channels, and the most imported/exported goods categorized by Harmonized System codes;

2) Data integration

Customs clearing agents will be able to upload information on the goods they are clearing, such as item lists, invoices

and certificates, in any standardized file format (xls, pdf and xml), and the system will adapt the files and input the information directly into the Customs declaration;

3) Clearing agent management module

As Customs clearing agents are Al Nadeeb's primary users, Qatar Customs has developed a dedicated module for them which provides the following services:

- online registration;
- licensing approvals;
- issuing of licences;
- systems training;
- system use reports (submitted and finalized shipments against each trader/customer, submitted and finalized shipments for each clearing agent/employee, paid duties and payment channels categorized by customer/agent/port, and licence expiry dates for companies and agents, etc.);
- managing Custom clearing agents.

Al Nadeeb has developed significantly over the last few years, with positive new advances and feedback from both the government and the private sector. Considered a flagship e-services project, it is an integral element in the ongoing development of the services offered by the country, resulting in Qatar becoming a highly efficient, safe and globally recognized trade-friendly country.

Qatar's efforts have led to an improved ranking in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) for the country – increasing its ranking from 55th in the world with a Customs score of 2.25/5 in 2010 to 29th with a Customs score of 3.52/5 in 2014. The Qatar Customs Clearance Single Window is certainly delivering improved results, not only for the State of Qatar, but also for Qatari Customs.

More Information

www.customs.gov.qa