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Single Submission Portal (SSP)

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PREAMBLE

The purpose of establishing a National Single Window (NSW) is to streamline procedures at the border and connect traders to all relevant agencies through a single portal. The NSW should handle regulatory procedures and must, therefore, have a mandate from the government to this end. This has been well-documented in UNECE Recommendations 33, 34 and 35; establishing an NSW is also a best-endeavour obligation under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

However, as experience has shown, implementation of a national single window is not an easy task. It involves strong engagement by all government agencies and can take years before it provides the trade facilitation measures promised to traders and agencies. Also, some countries may not have a national single window.

Meanwhile, the private sector sees the benefits that such systems can provide and are not necessarily waiting for an NSW to be fully implemented. They are launching facilitation platforms, based on their own initiatives, and traders – especially small and medium enterprises (SME) – are immediately able to reap benefits.

Although UN/CEFACT still strongly advises the establishment of NSW as outlined in Recommendations 33, 34 and 35, it also recognizes the pertinence of these private sector-driven initiatives. This document aims to provide recommendations and guidance on such trade-driven initiatives.

I. Recommendation X: Single Submission Portals

1 Introduction

The UNECE Trade Facilitation Section and the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) have continually worked on the topic of Single Window since the early 2000s. Experience has shown that the implementation of a national single window as defined in the base Recommendation 33 is not an easy task. It involves strong engagement from all government agencies and can take years to render the trade facilitation measures promised to traders and agencies.
Though we still believe that National Single Windows can render long term savings and facilitations, in the short term, the private sector sees the benefits that such mechanisms can provide and are not necessarily waiting for these to be fully implemented. They are launching facilitation platforms now and traders – especially micro and small-medium enterprises – are able to reap the benefits immediately. These private-sector driven initiatives correspond to what UN/CEFACT has termed “Single Submission Portals” (SSP).

2 Purpose and scope

This document explains the principle of SSPs, the potential stakeholders and the various services such systems can provide. These are all electronic, as the main purpose is to provide trade facilitation measures to economic operators and eventually to government authorities.
The current scope concentrates on a national environment of data exchange only. Some of the different examples of SSPs today include Port Community Systems, Cargo Community Systems, Data Pipelines, Customs Clearance Systems, Integrated Services for MSMEs for International Trade.
As SSPs can provide the same or similar trade facilitation mechanisms as a National Single Window, some countries may want to study either how to capitalize on such systems as a viable alternative to a National Single Window or how to exchange effectively with them to streamline procedures for both economic operators and government agencies.

3 Benefits

The Benefits are similar to those offered by National Single Window mechanisms: streamlining procedures, reducing wait times due to administrative procedures, reducing cost and so on. Both economic operators and government agencies should find benefits in using such systems, as outlined in the Guidelines.

4 International standards

SSPs are defined as being electronic systems, keeping in mind that the main objective should be the facilitations that can be achieved, not the electronic system itself. (i.e. the electronic system is a means to achieve trade facilitation and not a goal in itself). Being electronic, the use of internationally recognized and defined standards is paramount to ensure the interoperability between systems and the same understanding of individual pieces of information between sender and receiver. As described in the Guidelines, the main area of activity of most SSPs will be the B2B and B2G environment (business to business and business to government); for this reason, we believe that UN/CEFACT defined semantics and messages are the most appropriate international standards for these exchanges.

5 Recommendation

In light of the above, UN/CEFACT at its XXXX Plenary session in XXdateXX in Geneva recommended the following:

- Governments put in place the legally enabling environment allowing the establishment and the free-market operation of SSPs;
- Governments encourage the automated exchange of information into administrative systems (Single Window, customs as well as all other administrative electronic systems that deal with trade);
- Private sector operators consider putting in place SSPs in order to streamline and facilitate trade;
- All actors use internationally recognized standards and harmonized business processes, ideally using the models provided by UN/CEFACT.

Where standards, applications and technologies are no longer set by government agencies, but usually by the private sector, governments are advised to co-operate with private sector operators and look for interoperability options already available before developing new ones themselves.

II. Guidelines to Recommendation X: Single Submission Portals

1 Introduction

The purpose of establishing a National Single Window (NSW) is to streamline procedures at the border and connect traders to all relevant agencies through a single portal. The NSW should handle regulatory procedures and must, therefore, have a mandate from the government to this end. This has been well-documented in UNECE Recommendations 33, 34 and 35; establishing an NSW is also a best-endeavour obligation under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

However, as experience has shown, implementation of a national single window is not an easy task. It involves strong engagement from all government agencies and can take years before it provides the trade facilitation measures promised to traders and agencies. Also, some countries may not have a national single window.

Meanwhile, the private sector sees the benefits that such systems can provide and are not necessarily waiting for an NSW to be fully implemented. They are launching facilitation platforms, based on their own initiatives, and traders – especially small and medium enterprises (SME) – are immediately able to reap benefits.

Although UN/CEFACT still strongly advises the establishment of NSW as outlined in Recommendations 33, 34 and 35, it also recognizes the pertinence of these private sector-driven initiatives. This document aims to provide recommendations and guidance on such trade-driven initiatives.

2 Single Submission Portal

2.1 Definition of Single Submission Portal

A Single Submission Portal is an access point that allows traders to exchange information, in a standard format and related to a specific activity, with relevant parties and relevant government agencies.

SSPs will cover Business to Business (B2B) processes such as contracting for transport, logistics and financial services. SSPs will often also facilitate regulatory processes through Business to Government (B2G) information exchange, in cooperation with or within the context of a Single Window, if one exists. As the business processes covered can be as varied as the types of stakeholders that can exist in an international supply chain, there are a variety of types of SSPs. These are discussed below and can, potentially, coexist within a same economy.

In all SSPs, regardless of the type, economic operators are, ultimately, the main ‘clients’ to whom the offered trade facilitation services are targeted.

2.2 Relationship between the Single Submission Portal and the Single Window

A National Single Window, when it exists, is the obligatory gateway for all relevant regulatory information which is submitted to government authorities. If a Single Submission Portal exists in parallel to a NSW within an economy and facilitates regulatory processes through Business to Government (B2G) information exchange, then the required links should be established by the SSP with the NSW.

More and more countries are implementing NSWs. However, as SSPs cover Business to Business (B2B) processes, the SSP may be better-positioned to provide services to its business clients in the event that such services are not provided by the NSW. When such services comply with standards used by the NSW as well as those used by its clients, the SSP can facilitate both B2G and G2B information exchange.

In this respect, the SSP is complementary to the NSW, while each facility holds its own legal status. However, many economies have not yet established an official NSW and some NSW initiatives do not cover all of the regulatory procedures required for cross-border trade. This may oblige economic operators to continue communicating with multiple government agencies while these agencies wait to be phased into the NSW. In such situations, SSP operators cannot fully benefit from an NSW and may consider establishing facilities that cover some or all of their needs not yet included in the NSW.

Multiple SSPs could coexist within a single economy as they are private-sector driven, and presumably motivated by economic interest. Free market competition should be allowed in order to encourage the development of new, high-performance services and it is possible that only those SSPs which provide the most positive economic benefits to their users will survive.

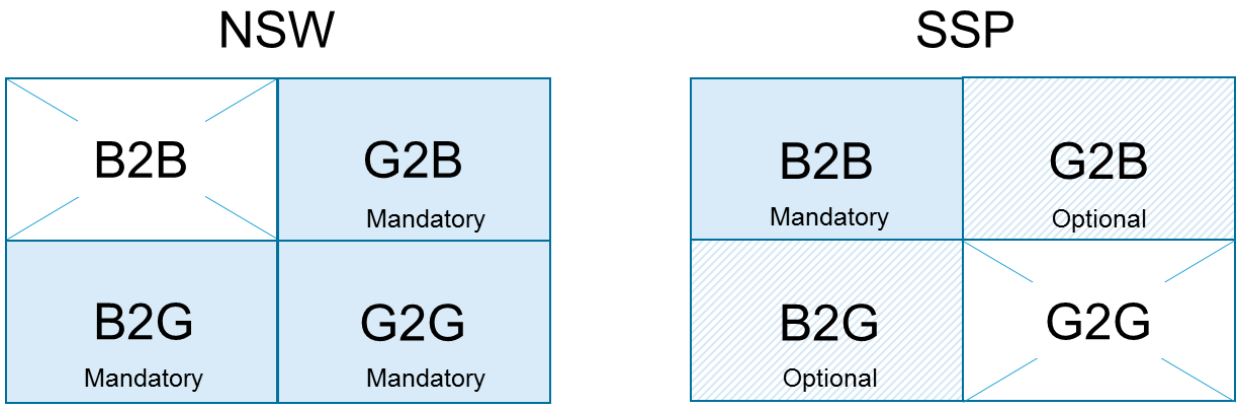

Fig. 1: The differences between a NSW and a SSP visualised.

Fig. 1 shows that from a NSW it is expected that it services B2G, G2B and G2G transactions (information exchange). It also shows that from a SSP it may be expected that it services B2B but may also service B2G and G2B.

Comparing both, it shows that both NSW and SSP can also be engaged in B2G and G2B information exchange. Consequently, when both NSW and SSP operate in the same segment of the market, supporting similar specific activities, it should be clear that:

- their services are complementary to each other, and provided to serve different traders;
- their services are interoperable, to facilitate single submission of data by these traders;
- the legal basis and governance of their services differ, as the NSW operates in the public domain and the SSP operates in the private domain. Consequently, the proper identification, authentication and authorization procedures in place, as well as when and how data may be shared and under what circumstances and with what organizations may also differ.

3 Main functions of a Single Submission Portal

SSPs can offer many functions. Below some functions of an SSP are stated. This list is not exclusive and SSPs will not by default offer all functions:

- Facilitate the submission of data for single transactions from companies and especially from MSMEs
- Improve interoperability between MSME and Single Windows
- Electronically link government agencies that are involved in the trade process;
- Provide tangible cost savings for business and the government;
- Expedite cargo release and clearance by controlling agencies through the simplification of trade-related processes and procedures;
- Provide benefits to the trading community by eliminating duplicated processes;
- Enable world-class trade facilitation practices by providing a fully-transparent and predictable border environment
- Enhance transparency and impartial treatment in the fiscal and customs framework; and
- Eliminate corruption by improving methods to counter dishonest practices and by reducing discretionary decisions.
- Facilitate communication from government agencies back to traders

The above functions are facilitated by the following.

3.1 Single Entry

The Single-Entry characteristic of an SSP is its most fundamental characteristic.
This functionality implies one single point of access. The “single entry” feature, supplemented with the “single submission” feature, means that traders do not need to submit their data separately, instead data submission is only performed once. The SSP system may offer a single point of access to various parties’ and government agencies’ back end systems.

The SSP may offer a set of shared services and may exhibit intelligence that differentiates it from data switches and from gateways. Examples of such shared services may include orchestration of inter-agency business processes which is shown as a single business service to users.

The SSP may undertake onward distribution of the relevant documentation and/or data requirements to the participating authorities or agencies. After examination of the documentation and/or data by the relevant authorities or agencies, the results can be notified to the applicants through the SSP.

3.2 Single Submission

This function implies one-off submission of data and relevant information to an SSP for onward distribution, at the request of and with the permission of the entitled person, according to the user agreement, to service providers and government agencies through the single-entry point. As described above, this feature implies that the traders submit their data only once through the single-entry point.

After submission, the data is made available to any authorized party or to government agencies which require them. However, the "one-off submission" feature does not refer to a single transmission of data as the data can be transmitted multiple times. This allows traders to incrementally submit data, as it becomes available and is needed. Consequently, in SSPs, the following principles could be implemented:

- Incremental submission of data; This is required in order to reflect a change or progression in a transaction.
- Reusability of data; This refers to the submission of data to multiple parties including government agencies and/or private sector service providers when this is required and is permitted by the entitled person.

3.3 User agreements

For terms and obligations related to data privacy, storage, transfer, transmission and use, the SSP may operate based on a User Agreement. The purpose of a User Agreement is to prevent disputes related to data management by governing the limitations on use, addressing obligations related to data safety and outlining any liabilities that may arise from the misuse of all private and confidential data by the SSP. This therefore means that the user agreement ensures that the trader's confidential data is kept private in all transactions conducted with and by the SSP.

3.4 Electronic Environment

SSP operators facilitate the move from paper-based systems to electronic environments, where required information is submitted, maintained and shared in an electronic form. The basis of a paperless system is the identification of the required documents / forms / licences and the data that these documents require, as well as the standardization of this information.

For parties to exchange information using fully electronic messages effectively, all information elements need to be clearly defined and unambiguous, both from a semantic and syntactical perspective. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the format of any electronic data exchange be recognised by industry standards, involved parties make no distinction between paper-based and electronic information and the data exchange itself is governed by a legal framework (see 3.3 and 3.6).

3.5 Standardized Documents and Data

Standardizing the information contained in its data flows is very important in an SSP as it is the key element in linking together different parties and government agencies as well as the parties within different countries (i.e. achieving cross-border connectivity).

The success of an SSP depends heavily on the ability to exchange messages in a format that the systems on both sides (private-sector parties and government agencies) can understand and manage (this is called “semantic interoperability”). This implies a common data reference model which serves as the logical model for the information used in cross-border trade.
This common data reference model for cross-border trade serves is the basis for the electronic documents specifications. In order to identify the elements of such a data reference model, one step in an SSP implementation requires the analysis of data models used by the various systems with which the SSP will communicate as well as the required documents (both paper-less and paper-based).

The process discussed above is also known as “data harmonization”. Within a Single Window environment, data harmonization is defined as the act of reconciling the definition and representation formats of data elements and this is also true for the SSP.
Through data harmonization, a set of core data elements (data elements with identical meanings but which may be expressed using different vocabularies) can be extracted. Descriptions of each core data element including its definition and representation format can then be formalized.

The goal of data harmonization is to eliminate redundancies, duplications and ambiguity in data, culminating in a set of standardized data requirements and standardized messages. The outcome of data harmonisation is the definition of national requirements, the mapping of these document requirements to international standards and the harmonisation of data requirements across documents, based on the comparison of the national trade requirements with international standards (e.g. UN/CEFACT Recommendations).
Another outcome of data harmonization is the alignment of documents to international standards, the usage of internationally accepted codes for trade data, and a reduction in the number of “documents”.

International standards which can be used include the UN Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDED) and the UN/CEFACT Core Components Library (CCL).

3.6 Sharing of Information (Information Dissemination)

Important information (e.g., customs declarations, permits and certificates) can be maintained in electronic format and shared with the appropriate parties or agency whenever it is requested and allowed.

In order to achieve this, not only must the data elements for exchange be standardized, the appropriate interfaces and message exchange formats must be defined in order to align the IT systems of the involved parties. In the business domain, sharing of this information is protected by the user agreement, as the legal framework that provides privacy, confidentiality and security in the exchange of information.

However, it should be recognised that when the information is shared with the appropriate government agency through a national single window (B2G), the use of the information by this government agency and the sharing of this information between government agencies are governed by public law.

4 Services that can be offered by a Single Submission Portal

4.1 Data re-use and data accuracy

SSP may service the re-use of data for different purposes, as using the data by another party for a subsequent action in the underlying business process or using the data by another party for a different business process or government action. Such a service should be governed by a proper legal framework and agreement between the submitting party and the SSP operator.
For this purpose, the SSP operator should have a proper identification, authentication and authorization procedure in place.

4.2 Clearance by border authorities

The SSP may enable and facilitate the provision of complete and accurate declaration data to cross-border agencies. Cross border regulatory authorities (customs, veterinary inspection, product safety authority, and others) may use the data provided by the SSP for risk-management purposes, clearance purposes or other

Specifically, on clearance, the SSP need to have arrangements with Customs and other cross-border agencies to provide trusted traders and authorised economic operators (AEOs) with quick release via the green channel[1]. Companies which have AEO status voluntarily meet a wide range of criteria and work in close cooperation with customs authorities to assure the common objective of supply chain security.

The SSP can facilitate increased compliance by supporting a common declaration process and functions by preventing declarants from sending information to authorities which does not follow business rules as defined by authorities. This contributes to operators' ability to maintain their AEO status and consequently continue to benefit from the related reduced inspection levels.

4.3 Trade Finance

The SSP can facilitate increased trade finance collection security by helping to check and validate trade finance instruments for Letters of Credit terms, thereby providing better business risk control.

Some of the finance-related benefits for both traders (specifically MSMEs) and government that an SSP can provide include:

- Since the money flow and logistics flow are conducted within the SSP, the information managed by the SSP can provide a reliable basis for managing associated risks, facilitating trade financing and compliance as well;

[1] The application of risk management and the use of risk-based selectivity (red/green channel) allows Customs to allocate its scarce resources to the high-risk areas while increasing the efficiency of the clearance process for low-risk shipments [TFIG UNECE Custom Risk management].

- The need to check all traders individually is reduced, particularly where the SSP's risk controls include checking a trader's legitimacy before accepting them as a trader in the SSP.

Further, the SSP can facilitate financial functions such as collections, tax refunds, trade-related insurance and loans.

4.4 Logistics

SSPs can offer a wide range of services connecting transport and logistics chains. Examples of such services are:

- Information exchange regarding import and export of cargo between all players in the logistics and transport chain, sharing detailed information like the manifest, bill of lading or electronic consignment note,
- Contracting of transport and freight forwarding services,
- Status information and control, tracking and tracing of shipments throughout the entire logistics chain.
- Terminal pre-notification for the pick-up or delivery of containers,
- Electronic facilitation of consolidation or division of shipments.

Where each of these services already deliver added-value to trade on a solitary basis, the combination of services, combining and re-using information are important features in SSP. With this integral, real-time re-use of available data, SSPs can enhance logistics by supporting synchro modal planning where operators are enabled to change the modality of transport for goods or transport equipment at any given node in the supply chain.

SSP's are ideally place to leverage the use of technologies such as the 'Internet of Things' (IOT), Location-Based Services (LBS), Blockchain and Data Pipelines on its platform to create a more secure trade lane to help operators:

- Gain insight on the status of the transported goods, especially on perishable goods,
- Improve logistics planning by using location-based data,
- Combat crime, such as theft.

As an ultimate result, traders can improve their supply chain compliance and trade facilitation thanks to the SSP's rigorous systems and procedures.

5 Benefits

5.1 Benefits for trade

An SSP can offer trade benefits thanks to the opportunities it provides for data-sharing and re-use of information in the supply chain, including in multimodal transport. Currently, many of these opportunities are already provided by services which facilitate electronic information exchange between business partners. The operators of these B2B services usually take a neutral position and facilitate an

intelligent and secure exchange of information that respects the business relations of their clients and does not disturb free market processes.

When a range of such services is offered by one platform, facilitating data-sharing and the re-use of information, in many cases it can be said that the platform operators already provide B2B 'single submission and multiple use of data'. The legal basis for such information sharing is the contract between the data holder and the operator. This provision is not only used for the data holder's business needs, but also for its regulatory needs, as mentioned in chapter 2.2

When SSPs provide an interface to official, regulatory systems, whether existing or new, traders and other supply chain stakeholders can continue to work using the web screens of the SSP or their own industry applications and message standards, without being concerned by the consequences to their systems and processes of an NSW implementation, or even changes to an existing NSW. In this respect, the SSP ensures that B2G information exchange – and vice versa - is translated into the proper formats and standards, and in compliance with industry and customer demands.

5.2 Benefits for MSMEs

MSMEs can benefit from the existence of SSPs due to a combination of features an SSP brings to the trade environment.
Some benefits are:

- Single submission. When allowed by national legislation, MSMEs just need to submit all the required information (e.g. customs, tax, inspection) once and do not need to submit information to different places. This can improve their efficiency in international trade and reduce their costs.
- Easier clearance. MSMEs can rely on SSPs to help them to take care of the clearance process because SSP can facilitate the provision of complete and accurate declaration data to cross-border agencies.
- Better financial support. MSMEs can get better financial support from banks with the help of an SSP because an SSP may be able to facilitate increased trade finance collection security and provide better business risk control. Banks can provide MSMEs with better credit rankings and access to trade finance instruments when information on trade transactions is readily available through an SSP.
- More efficient logistics. MSMEs can get more efficient and cheaper logistics and transport services because SSPs can offer a wide range of services connecting transport and logistics chains.
- Reduced business transaction costs: With an SSP, MSMEs can interact with the standard import and export service eco-system with lower costs and higher efficiency. This may reduce MSMEs' recruitment needs within their own international trade staff, thus saving human resources and management costs.

5.3 Benefits for administrations

Administrations can benefit from the existence of SSPs due to a combination of features an SSP brings to the Single Window environment. This combination of SSP features leads to more comprehensive, streamlined and automated business compliance with governments' legislative and regulatory

requirements than without a SSP. Consequently, as both SSP and the SW include the terms of international trade treaties, this will also improve the efficiency of Single Windows.

SSPs could provide specific functions that Single Windows or authorities' systems may not cover.

Specific benefits are:

- Enhanced quality of data;

SSPs often receive data from the source – data owner – and can ensure data quality by using comprehensive validations on data input. Since these validations are carried out centrally and consistently at SSPs, this also enhances the quality of the entire information chain. Often, SSPs have a broad business knowledge which helps in determining the right validation mechanisms. A high level of data quality ensures a smooth process with administration systems.

- Shorter time-to-market for changes initiated by authorities;

As aligning changes only have to be done with a limited number of parties (the SSP and often only a few associations representing the business parties impacted), this will lead to solutions which are faster and easier to achieve and better fit the needs of all stakeholders.

- Platform for connecting authorities with the business environment;

SSPs can provide a platform, online or offline, where authorities can consult business parties on the implementation of new legislation, but also on business needs and technical developments. This platform, based on a constructive co-operation among all parties, could have an official status or could be more free-format depending on the needs of the stakeholders.

- Easier road to standardisation for administrations;

SSPs can support the implementation and use of standardisation and harmonisation initiated by authorities (B2G) as well support the continued use of well-established industry standards (B2B). This position as an intermediary can be used to prevent business being confronted with standards that are unfamiliar to them but can also be used to enhance harmonisation of standards on both sides. Consequently, the SSP is able to translate new standards to old standards and vice versa, which can be beneficiary to both administrations and the business environment.

6 Some possible types of SSPs

Multiple forms of systems can exist to assist the different actors on the supply chain to manage their activities in the chain. Each actor can have a very different view and different data needs. Naturally, over the years, software providers have developed systems to help each of these actors to perform their activities in the most efficient way possible. It is therefore not surprising that in the list below many of the types of SSPs identified cater to different types of economic operators. The main facilitation for each of these economic operators is that they only need to exchange with their own SSP service provider and that the SSP in question then performs the majority of the exchanges with other actors, whether they be private sector actors or government agencies.

The multiplicity of different systems illustrates the importance of using international standards. If each of these systems is developed and works in isolation from the others, it will be difficult or tedious to establish connections with other systems and the information exchanged may be defined very differently. For example, the date of arrival in a port community system would likely be very different from the date of arrival in a warehouse management system and so on. We therefore highly recommend using UN/CEFACT standards to define the base semantics of the information to be exchanged and recommend the consideration of UN/CEFACT standards for the data exchange.

6.1 PCS (Port Community System)

A Port Community System usually defines itself as a neutral and open electronic platform enabling an intelligent and secure exchange of information between public and private stakeholders in order to improve the competitive position of sea- and/or airport communities (sometimes referred to as Port Community User Groups)[2].

The PCS is often based around a single port (whether sea, air, inland, or rail) or multiple ports within an economy. A PCS can be public, private or a public/private model. Where the PCS is a private organization, a government may still consider it to be critical public infrastructure.

In situations where a Port Community System the same functions as a Single Window system, as defined in Recommendation 33, it is no longer considered a SSP.
In particular, this could be the case when the PCS has received a clear mandate from the government to be the sole provider of specific services to facilitate regulatory requirements, and there is only one PCS in the given economy
If there are multiple PCSs in the same economy, then carriers or other economic operators trading within the given economy will need to communicate with multiple systems; therefore, it is not a Single Window for all operations within that economy.

When these conditions are fulfilled, the type of economic operator could be identified by the system in its name (Single Window for maritime carriers…). Otherwise it might be considered a Single Submission Portal or as a system contributing to a Single Environment[3].

6.2 CCS (Cargo Community System)

A Cargo Community System (CCS) is an information technology platform linked to the freight flows (import/export/transit) of any kind of cargo passing through an identified port, airport, or multimodal site(s) at a local or national level. A CCS is open to all parties involved in cargo freight and logistics, including customs administrations. It handles a database in which information is collected, processed, stored and exchanged aiming to enhance freight optimization, trade safety and security, cargo tracking and tracing, and the facilitation of customs and administrative procedures. These systems might be considered a Single Submission Portal or as contributing to a Single Environment[4].

[2] taken from terminology technical note
[3] See also UNECE Technical Note on Terminology for Single Window and other electronic platforms
[4] taken from terminology technical note

6.3 Customs Clearance Systems

Many economic operators who are involved in international trade utilize customs clearance management software systems to prepare and transmit electronically all their detailed import, export or transit declarations to government customs administration IT systems. As paper-based declaration options are gradually replaced by the requirement for traders to file electronically, customs clearance systems provide a valuable and indispensable tool to economic operators who rely on the services offered in order to remain compliant with cross-border regulations.

Customs clearance systems often act as the front-end interface for traders to convey all their declarative information to government agencies for the clearance of the goods. In addition to providing assistance in the preparation of declarations and their supporting documents, these systems may also propose other functionalities to traders to facilitate data-collection, automation, report creation and duty payment monitoring, for example.

Customs clearance systems can also enable traders to coordinate with other partners in the supply chain to exchange or prepare commercial documentation and data elements linked with cross-border movement of goods.

6.4 FFS (Freight Forwarding System)

Most Freight Forwarders have electronic systems that permit them to prepare all the documentation related to the movement of goods and to coordinate and exchange information with other actors on the supply chain. The information is usually organized in a manner which is consistent with logistics operations and can help with multiple aspects of such movements including the management of arrivals/departures, the management of fleets, stock management and so on.

6.5 ISMIT (Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade)

ISMIT (Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade) Platforms can assemble service providers and service partners (such as customs brokers, freight forwarders, logistics service providers, warehouses, export agencies, banks, insurance companies, law firms, etc.) to provide MSMEs with professional international trade services, such as customs clearance, tax refunds, foreign exchange settlement, logistics, insurance, financing, legal advice, etc. [5].

[5] See https://uncefact.unece.org/display/uncefactpublic/ISMIT+-+Integrated+Services+for+MSMEs+in+International+Trade

7 Key factors in the success of a Single Submission Portal

In order to be successful, the SSP should be able to act as a trusted third party when providing information services, thus enabling B2B information exchange between stakeholders in trade and transport.
In addition, the SSP should provide its clients with a user-interface or electronic interface using internationally-recognized standards to facilitate the B2G and G2B information exchanges required for regulatory processes.

Other key factors for the success of an SSP are:

- Knowledge of cross-border trade- and transport regulatory requirements;
- An accreditation to provide a Single-Entry Point for Business to Government (B2G) information exchange, according to national law;
- Long-term commitment of one or more investors
- 24/7 service availability;
- Optimal opportunities for business, when they wish to do so, to re-use their data;
- Clear uncoupling of the public and private domains, such that SSP clients do not need to adapt their interfaces or systems due to changes imposed by the NSW operator (or other stakeholders that use the SSP such as banks) because these are handled by the interface between the NSW (or others) and the SSP;
- Acting as trusted third party, ensuring mutual trust and equality to its clients;
- Focus on information exchange between multiple types of stakeholders in the same business environment; and
- Cost efficiency.

ANNEX 1 Table of abbreviations

Acronym	Signification
B2B	Business to Business
B2G	Business to Government
CCS	Cargo Community System
FFS	Freight Forwarding System
G2G	Government to Government
ISMIT	Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade
MSME	Micro-, Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
NSW	National Single Window
PCS	Port Community System
PGA	Participating government agencies
RSW	Regional Single Window
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
SSP	Single-Submission Portal
UN/CEFACT	United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

ANNEX 2 Explanation of terms

Term	Definition
Portal	An access point that allows traders to exchange information related to a specific activity in a single electronic platform
Platform	A platform is any hardware or software used to host an application or service.

ANNEX 3 Repository/Case Studies of Single Submission Portals

Will be provided separately. Based on the questionnaire (format for SSP to be developed)