The Single Window concept:
A key instrument for trade facilitation and good governance

An overwhelming majority of economists, from Adam Smith and David Ricardo to John Maynard Keynes, Milton Friedman and Joseph Eugene Stiglitz, voted for free trade. Trade liberalization is a key for world economy development after the Second World War. During the years since 1945 they laid stress on reduction of customs duties. However, in 1990s when tariff barriers were mostly eliminated, decision-makers were focused on more complicated issue of nontariff barriers. For this reason exactly the interest to trade facilitation increased. To deal with this issue the following Agreement in the framework of World Trade Organisation (WTO) will be used.

The key issue of trade facilitation is the reduction of bureaucratic hurdles impeding border crossing procedures. Why demanding from trade operators to submit nearly 40 documents to different agencies with duplicating information? To reduce these formalities, collect the necessary information fast and simply - this is the very core of trade facilitation. Simplification and facilitation of procedures, data and documents, their compliance with international standards, computerization of documents and trade procedures will significantly accelerate goods and information movement across the borders. About 40 years ago US experts estimated that elimination of bureaucratic burden and document flows would result into 7% decrease of costs for trade operations in US. This is quite a large amount which we lost only over poor governance.

Single Window Concept

In this context Single Window for export and import clearance is an advanced tool for trade facilitation. The single window is clearly a trade facilitative measure. It permits the trader or transporter to submit all the data needed for determining admissibility of the goods in a standardized format only once to the authorities involved in border controls and at a single portal. This is a system that allows all participants in trade and transport file requested information in only one place, in a standard format, in order to carry out import, export and transit operations.

Picture 1 shows how to make efficient system out of complicated network of information share between economic operators and state agencies which is quite time and personnel consuming. Felixstowe, the United Kingdom's (UK) premier container port and the first in the country to introduce such a system increased its efficiency manifold. Maritime Cargo Processing Plc is the community-owned company established to manage and market the system. The system used in Felixstowe, originally FCP80, changed its name in 1990 to FCPS (the Felixstowe Cargo Processing System). It was identified at an early stage that one of the main causes of delay was the processing of customs declarations. Average clearance times were between four and five days and figures showed that one in three declarations received by Customs contained errors. The introduction of DTI alone led to a dramatic improvement in clearance times, from the previous four to five days to around one hour.
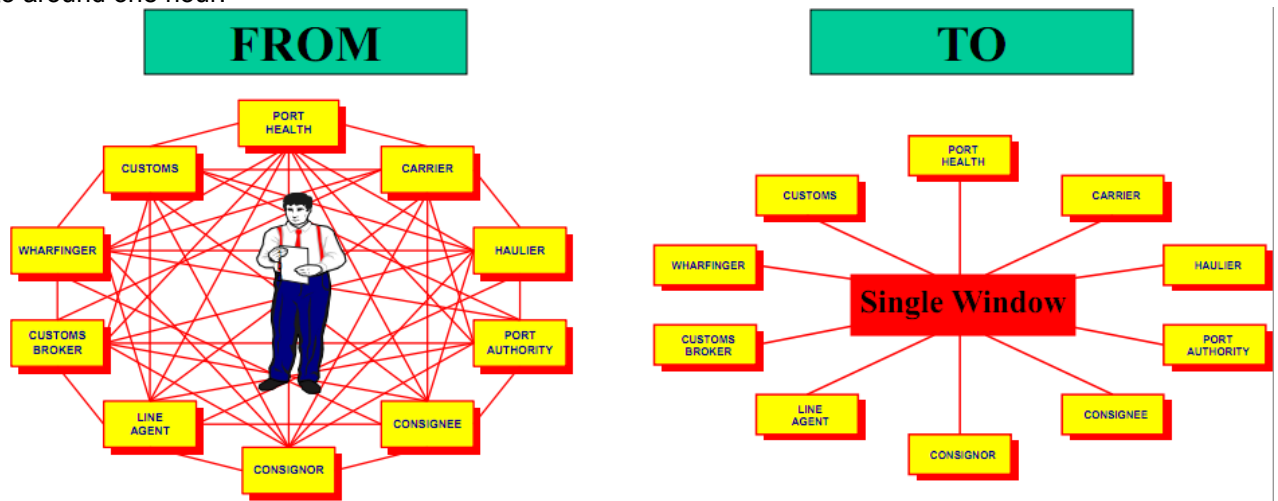
Pic. 1. Community service: A Single Window.

Single Window Concept is already introduced in Japan, Singapore, Sweden, US and Senegal. Their experience gave base for the development of Recommendation 33 by UN/CEFACT. This Recommendation (*see http://www.unece.org/cefact/recommendations/rec33/rec33_trd352r.pdf* — ***author's note***) provides general view on Single Window Concept, describes various Single Window systems and benefits of its introduction. It shows the key steps to establish Single Window. Following the release of the Recommendation and Guidelines on Establishing a Single Window, numerous countries approached UNECE with requests for information and support in planning and implementing their Single Window initiatives. The Repository of Single Window implementation was established in response to these requests (*see http://www.unece.org/cefact/single_window/welcome.htm* — ***author's note***).

UN/CEFACT Recommendation 34 Data Simplification and Standardization for International Trade compliments the Repository. Recommendation 34 recommends a simple four-stage process to achieve a national simplified and standardized dataset to meet government information requirements. The main idea is to make all the relevant agencies and trade operators "speak one language" using the same classifier s and codes compliant with international standards elaborated by UNECE, World Customs Organisation (WCO) and other international organisations. In October 2010 UN/CEFACT adopted Recommendation No. 35 Establishing a legal framework for international trade Single Window. UN/CEFACT provides countries and economies with practical tools to facilitate the introduction of Single Window facilities and to ensure their interoperability This Recommendation extends that support by helping them also to address legal issues related to national and cross-border exchange of trade data required for Single Window operations. This Recommendation will be soon complemented by Recommendation 36 Interaction between Single Window systems. The work has just started.

The implementation of a Single Window can be highly beneficial for both Governments and trade. For Governments it can bring better risk management, improved levels of security and increased revenue yields with enhanced trader compliance. Trading communities benefit from transparent and predictable interpretation and application of rules, and better deployment of human and financial resources, resulting in appreciable gains in productivity and competitiveness. The value of such a facility for governments and traders has taken on increased importance in the new security environment with its emphasis on advance information and risk analysis. In a similar vein Single window means better transparency during data collection on trade flows and less corruption level, which is a win-win situation for everybody except for delinquents.

When the agencies collect the relevant data and share it, the key background for corruption disappears – I mean subjective control of information flows, including in critical moments of physical control and clearance. Francis Bacon (1561—1626) once said, "Knowledge is power" (*Ipsa Scientia Potestas Est*). Control of form and data flows and information owned by state authorities gives control officers the power, including the power to get illegitimate income. This is a main benefit single window can give – objective contribution to fight against corruption – and the main challenge to calculate the correlation between costs and benefits from this system. The attempts to calculate the benefits from elimination of corruption in the exact numbers have always been a big challenge. In this context it is not right to consider the single window introduction only from the point of view of income. It is necessary to consider the long-term benefit.

There are various single window models (*see http://www.unece.org/cefact/single_window/welcome.htm — author's note*). The system may be fully financed by government funds (Finland, Sweden, US) or by private sector (Guatemala and Hamburg). They may function on the base of public-private partnership (Hong-Kong, China, Malaysia, Mauritius, Senegal, Singapore). They may differ as regards the methods of application: in Finland, Guatemala, Senegal and Mauritius the application is mandatory, however, in Hamburg, Malaysia, Sweden and US it is voluntary. As regards the services rendered, single window provides free of charge services (Finland, Sweden, US) and services on a fee-paying basis (Guatemala, Hamburg, Hong-Kong, Malaysia, Mauritius, Senegal, Singapore).

Certain persons or group of persons working in control agencies may consider single window as a hazard for their legal and illegal sources of income. Overcoming narrow-departmental and individual interests is the main barrier for introduction of Single window. Attempts to create a public good always require political will and binding decision at the highest level. In many states political push played a key role. In South Korea, for instance, Prime Minister demanded the reports on Single Window Project every three months. US made this push after the September 11 attacks. Government combines two key control agencies: customs and border authorities as the beginning of complicated actions on introduction of the single window. In this same sense European Union still expects European Commission to launch coordinated policy on establishing interacted national single windows. In the states where trade facilitation is closely connected with the core of economy (Japan, Singapore, Sweden, ports of Rotterdam, Hamburg, Felixstowe and Amsterdam airport) single window was introduced step by step on business initiative.

Two directions mark the work on establishing the single window: political and technical one. Political preparation includes encouragement of political will to support the project, negotiations between the agencies on the instrument for cooperation. It is necessary to create interagency group of service managers responsible for creation of joint system which will act during the whole project. The first stage requires the single window concept and technical and economic feasibility studies on return of investments, reasonable volume and nature of services. At the initial stages it is necessary to appoint the leading organization. Customs always plays this role as it is responsible for over 60% of control procedure in international trade. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the leading and enabling organizations may differ. The lion's share of single window introduction takes coordination of actions between the agencies – over 80%. The remaining share is technical; it requires interagency working group of technical experts. If it takes 20% of efforts it can be divided into 10% of actions on data harmonization (bringing definitions and classifiers into compliance with the common standards, better international ones) and the remaining 10% is for creation of single window electronic system.

Difference between Single Window and related notions

People always confuse single window with similar but still unlike notions: one-stop-shop or Integrated Border Management. Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty one said "When I use a word, it means just what I

choose it to mean." Therefore when people say "single window at the border" they mean what they want it to mean, however they mostly mean "integrated border management". Sometimes they say "one-stop-shop" meaning just single window.

One-Stop-Shop concept fundamentally differs from single window even though these two systems may work in parallel. One-stop-shop means the control authorities are all in one place. In many states this concept is introduced within different agencies: at the borders or in clearance points. In Mongolia where 95% of international trade is made by rail (between Russia and China), and where container traffic is quite developed your container may cross the border without stops and then it may be stopped at one of the container terminals in Ulan-Bator. At the entry to the terminal there is "one stop": small house for customs, phytosanitary and vet inspections, technical regulations, freight forwarding companies, bank (to pay duties), etc. What is the difference between one-stop-shop and single window? Within one-stop-shop various agencies may have no communication between each other, however the single window provides information share between control authorities.
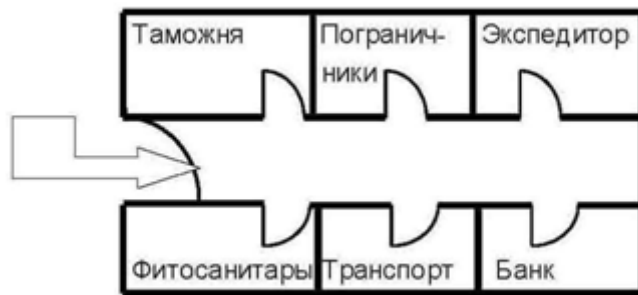
Pic. 2. One-Stop-Shop Concept: control authorities are physically in one place but they don't share information.

Single window differs from one-stop-shop. Traders and control agencies may be in different physical locations, but information flows among them are interconnected. Basically, single window is a virtual data share system for different agencies. Even if somebody wants to have a view on operations, there is nothing to look at: computers just share information. Thus, for example, Sweden has presented customs electronic system serving for the single window that is based beyond the Arctic Circle, in Luleo. Inspection authorities connected to the single window are based in different cities.
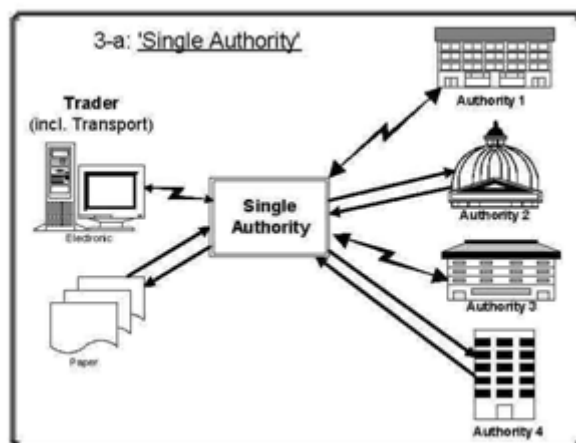
Pic. 3. Single Window: virtual system for collection of information on commercial transactions and data share between the agencies.

Single window is often connected (and confused) with "Integrated Border Management" (IBM). The latter mainly refers to control functions of different agencies at the border (and that is why it is connected with data share). Integrated Border Management (IBM) is the organization and supervision of border agency activities to meet the common challenge of facilitating the movement of legitimate people and goods while maintaining secure borders and meeting national legal requirements. Single window is related to collection and dissemination of information not only at the border. This process contributes to integrated border management. Single window as a rule is based on other type of agreement. Some agencies may participate in one agreement and not participate in the other one. For instance, national vet inspection in Sweden (Linköping) participates in integrateв border management agreement. Inspection decides not to participate in the single window. Thus, the trader importing goods subject to vet control (e.g. live animals) should complete and lodge documents to vet inspection in Linköping additionally to information he had already submitted to the single window managing by Swedish customs. However, if in the process of risk analysis vet inspection

is concerned about the goods, it may contact customs and ask it to stop, examine or take goods in custody for further inspection (if risk is high). Therefore, two systems differ but complement each other. Single window may play the key role in lodging information for efficient functioning of integrated border management.

Another notion closely connected with the single window is risk analysis and risk management in international trade. To be able to efficiently control legal and illegal goods flows control authorities take the set of measures focused on risk defining and assessment and on restriction of possibilities to turn these risks into the real hazard for economy, health, security of nation and public morals. Customs officers analyzing risks should, for example, evaluate and compare the risk level with preliminary defined standards, target levels and other criteria. Control authorities take the further steps:

| Spe cify risk s | Check goods and inform a | Improve control method | Anal yze | Calc ulate risk level | Repe at the proce ss |

The so called "risk management" is based on this process which is defined by World Customs Organization (WCO) as a " Systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the activities of documenting, communicating, consulting, establishing the context, and identifying, analyzing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risk." Advanced lodging of information is very important for this process. It is here where the single window is able to assist in fast and efficient collection of data before the goods come.

Risk analysis and management includes different aspects of trade operations. Different agencies consider different scope of activities and aspects of goods: from collecting taxes and duties to possible terrorism, risks for human, animal and plant health, environmental protection, for development of local industries, etc. Lately they often talk about the possibility to coordinate the evaluation and risk management by coordinated actions of different agencies. This integrated risk management requires new approaches and methodology and it is closely connected with single window operation.

One more notion related to the single window and risk analysis – Authorised Economic Operator (AEO). Potential of facilitated procedures for identified lawful operators may be fully fulfilled if all the agencies provide information on operators to the other agencies and to control system.

Master Plan

Why we need a Master Plan? Practice proved that different interests in different agencies are a significant barrier for implementing the project on joint collection and dissemination of information of trade flows. One of the possible strategies to solve this problem is creation and adoption of more or less binding Master Plan. This is general draft document defining the development of single window recording the tasks and roles of each agency. It is a document that defines how the overall programme and a series of projects under its domain are executed, monitored, and controlled. It gives explicit explanation how to plan, create, develop and serve the single window, what problem and possible solutions may exist. Master Plan is a "live document" which can be amended when it is needed. Below is a framework to elaborate a Master Plan. The steps may be performed in any other order. Other specific actions may also be included:

1. Request by business. Often everything starts from the business requesting different state authorities to coordinate their actions and collect the same information only once to further disseminate it between each other.

2. Authorities respond with convocation of Interagency Council authorized to discuss this offer.

3. Draft an initial Concept Paper. It describes the key ideas of single window concept based on the following aspects: particular characteristics of the states; its business processes; existing international standards and best practices.

4. Responsible authorities shall decide on feasibility of single window project.

5. Business Process Analysis. When the decision is taken, the business process analysis shall be conducted. They should consider what data or documents are collected for several times and what information is submitted without any practical sense.

6. Analysis of participants and users of the future system.

7. Decision on the scope of the Single Window: what services to be rendered and what documents and processes to be covered.

8. Identify the sources of funding on the initial stages.

9. The key step in establishing the single window is identification of the lead and implementing agencies. Frequently, the lead organization is customs as it controls goods flows and information. European Commission has appointed customs services to work on national single window networks. The functions of leading organization may be given to the other agency.

10. Establish interagency management group: (a) ad hoc interagency steering group and technical expert group (b) interagency target group consisting of technical specialists and managers for practical and technical work on project.

11. Study the legal prerequisites. Analyse legal environment: is it contributes to the establishing of single window? UN/CEFACT Recommendation 35 "Establishing a Legal Framework for International Trade Single

Window" offers checklist of legal issues for single window operations: are they contribute to single window processes? If the answer is negative, what should be changed or what legal documents should be created and applied? Analysis should include such issues as: Has the legal basis for the implementation of the single window facility been examined/established; Has an appropriate organizational structure for the establishment and operation of a single window facility been chosen?; Are proper identification, authentication and authorization procedures in place? Are procedures in place for electronic archiving and the creation of audit trails?; When and how data may be shared and under what circumstances and with what organizations within the government or with government agencies in other countries?; Are there mechanisms in place for dispute resolution?

12. Feasibility study. The feasibility study is a key element of the overall Single Window development. The study should determine the potential scope of the Single Window, the level and nature of demand, possible scenarios for implementation (including possible phases of implementation), potential for and nature of a pilot implementation, the cost of implementation under the different scenarios, other resources required (human, technical, etc), potential benefits and risks, time frame, implementation and management strategy. Key component of feasibility study is benchmarking study of expected costs and results.

Before starting the feasibility study it is necessary to define what subjects, processes and forms should be covered. Business process analysis will also reveal the benefits of single window introduction and efficiency of the expected costs. Single window may cover important processes: customs clearance and handling, freight forwarding activities, import, export, certification and licensing, transport (internal and international; road, rail, etc.), dangerous goods, payment statistics (single window of payments), etc. Feasibility study may also show what documents should be covered in single window system: export and import freight declarations; manifests; certificates (phytosanitary, sanitary, of origin, security, etc.); reports on goods compliance; internal documents; shipment specifications; certificates from customs inspection and stamps; reports on dangerous goods; waybills and rail consignment notes, documents on delays, inspection of goods; invoices, etc.

13. Work Plan (on the basis of the Feasibility Study) (what should be done and where). It may be prepared by an internal expert.

14. Standardization and harmonization of data. Further the technical work starts. The first stage is consolidation of data required by different agencies. This is a key technical issue of single window establishment. It is necessary to agree on data elements, codes of various systems between the agencies and private operators and between the states on the base of international standards and classifiers. Thus control authorities and business will "speak one language". UN CEFACT has prepared Draft Recommendation 34 "Data Simplification and Standardization for International Trade" showing the common model of standartisation and data reconciliation.

15. Data model. The data model for the share of structured information shall be established on the base of reconciliation. Single window is not only a switch disseminating information between new users. It is an intellectual system based on structured data elements. The possibility to find data elements to use them in different forms is the core of WCO Data Model and Key Components Standard by UN CEFACT.

16. Diagramme of data flows (B2G, G2G, G2B). Experts often say that the most practical variant of single window is business to government flow (B2G). However single window suggests data share between agencies (G2G), and agency to business (G2B) on procedures and documents and on existence of permit for trade operation after the documents were lodged via single window.
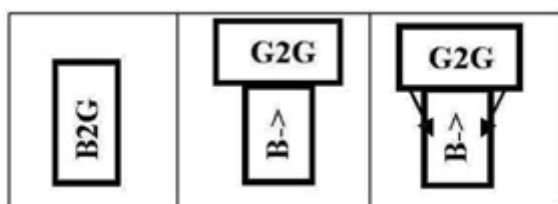
Pic. 3. Diagramme of data flows within single window

17. Technical infrastructure, model and administration of the project (enterprise architecture). In the technical infrastructure plan you should choose or create new software architecture for single e-window data share system. You will need analysis of existing systems and resource base and description and evaluation of proposal on resource base and software supporting single window. This is the base for creation of computer center to manage communications and transferring messages in single window system.

18. Technical model of single window should provide: agreement on services; defining the existing problems connected with communications between the agencies; what programs, platforms, applications and interfaces will be used. Consequently, it is necessary to define the options for communication between single window and other systems: handling of customs data, integrated border management, etc. The more you use existing international trade data share standards within interstate and interagency levels, the better for solving common tasks of interstate data share. Technical model reveals the means of integrating message flow and declaration process using web-portal.

19. In terms of administrative structure establishment and performance strategy for single window it is

necessary to define the needs in organizational, financial and human resources and the need in outsourcing and the approach to be applied.

20. Control configuration plan. Ensure the compliance of technical system with integrated functional business plan to make the single window render the planned services.

21. Elaborate risk management plan in the context of various risk sources: lost political will, changes in trade procedures or interaction between agencies, lost financial support, etc.

22. In the process of implementation of project and transition plans it is necessary to stick to strategic solutions on single window establishment, finances, interagency cooperation, employment and administrative work. You should establish a dialogue with private sector as its support is always needed.

23. Training plan is important for various levels of government and business and for implementing and managing personnel and customers to make users aware of new procedures and methods of work.

24. And finally good communication strategy should be established and implemented. Organize active campaign to attract stakeholders from government and business and from other states. Business also needs some time to adapt to single window.

Data harmonization

Why harmonise data? First of all, to lay a foundation for the single window it is necessary to make informational systems of different agencies "speak one language", i.e. use common codes, classifiers and data elements. However, data reconciliation at the national level should be based on international standards. If in the process of single window establishment the state creates its own data set based on its own codes and data elements, it will create new problem and single window will be isolated. Secondly, it is necessary to connect single windows and trade data flows between the states using data harmonization with international standards and classifiers. Thirdly, data reconciliation is necessary for creation of electronic documents (in XML).

Data harmonization is the goal of Recommendation 34. It may be made on the base of international standards: (a) UNTDED United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (EDIFACT) (UNTDED, ISO7372) *(see http://www.unece.org/trade/untded/untded2005.pdf — author's note*), adopted by World Customs Organization (WCO); (b) WCO Data Moder Version 3 (c) Core Components. It is necessary to use best practices of US, EU and other states.

Instruments for standartisation and data modeling

We are talking about data share between the states, companies and, first of all, customs authorities. Better data interchange may contribute to profiling and risk analysis in international trade.

It is worth emphasizing the standards adopted in national and international scope. WCO finished the work on guidelines for advance lodging of information on goods, which is one of the examples of international standartisation. National standards for trade and transport documents are often elaborated for paper documents and procedures based on them. E-documents should be adapted to these procedures as well as to reorganize business processes to contribute to electronic data share.

Within the United Nations framework of the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves as the focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. In this context, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) was established, as a subsidiary, intergovernmental body of the UNECE Committee on Trade, mandated to develop a programme of work of global relevance to achieve improved worldwide coordination and cooperation in these areas. UN/CEFACT supports and develops international standard for electronic data interchange for administration, commerce and transportation EDIFACT (the only one global standard for electronic data interchange - EOD/EDI) (*see http://www.gefeg.com/jswg — author's note*). An overwhelming majority of private companies, carriers, customs administrations and other agencies use EDIFACT standard. Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDED) which is now under development by UNECE and UN/CEFACT (*see http://www.unece.org/trade/untdid/UNTDED2005.pdf — author's note*), is upgraded every 5 years. UNTDID (or EDIFACT Directory) (*see http://www.unece.org/trade/untdid/welcome.htm — author's note*), which is upgraded biennially. Moreover, UN/CEFACT has adopted the set of International Recommendations including the recommendations on international codes and classifiers. New standard "Core Components" is already developed: it is for data interchange using XML" program product for Internet. Core Components Library (*new versions of library (twice a year) are available on the CEFACT website: http://www.unece.org/cefact/codesfortrade/unccl/CCL_index.htm — author's note*) is upgraded twice a year. More information on Core Components is available here: http://www.unece.org/cefact/codesfortrade/CCTS_index.htm.

Another standard is ISO 3535 - Forms design sheet and layout chart, which lays down the basic principles for the design of forms, whether discrete forms or continuous forms, and establishes a forms design sheet and a layout chart based on these principles and applies to the design of forms for administrative, commercial and technical use, whether for completion in handwriting or by mechanical means such as typewriters and automatic printers. Please, note also UN/LOCODE, the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations, a geographic coding scheme developed and maintained by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), a unit of the United Nations. UN/LOCODE assigns codes to

locations used in trade and transport with functions such as seaports, rail and road terminals, airports, post offices and border crossing points.

Harmonizing and mapping of data requirements

It is necessary to collect data elements (name of slots in separate forms), then to analyze them and give the exact names. Then analyze the similar data. CEFACT Recommendation 34 defines the following steps for data harmonization:

(1) Capture (identifying and inventorying agencies requirements);
(2) Define (the meaning – what information is conveyed);
(3) Analyze (comparing similar names and definitions) and
(4) Reconcile (agreement to use one name, definition, coding).

US and Australia have already used this scheme. They established a Working Group consisting of experts from different agencies, which collected the data from different forms they are responsible for. They evaluated their usage: what elements duplicate, what elements are unnecessary, etc. US harmonization scheme is in picture 4. The goal of analysis and revision of business process lies in elimination of the excessive data elements and forms and in combination of duplicating elements required by different agencies. UN, European Union, research and development centers and private companies have elaborated methodology for business process analysis.
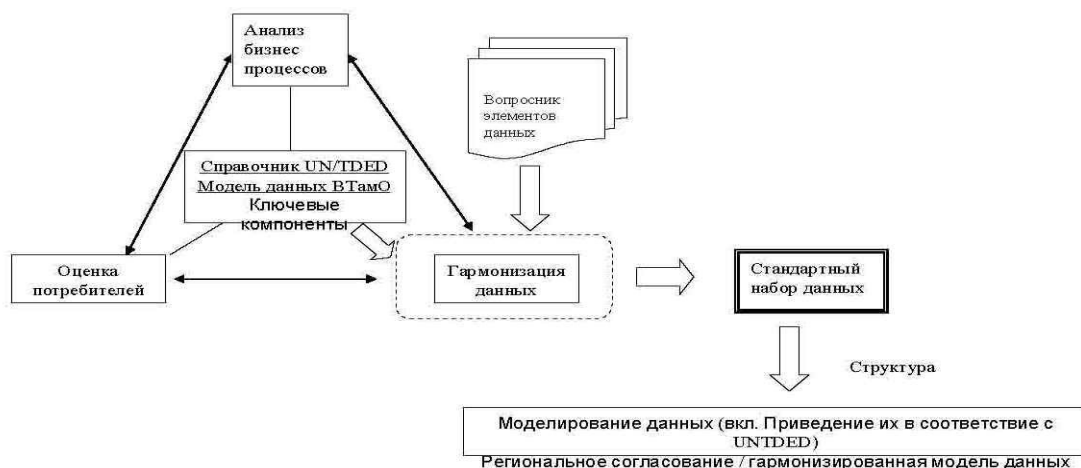

Рис.4. Согласование и моделирование данных

The first three stages may be implemented using the instruments as per the table below (Excel). In different columns you see: number of gap in the form, abbreviated name of form, codes under WCO model, UN/LOCOD, name of element, identification and notes concerning the nature of coding and defining the element as well as the possibility to combine the elements from different documents.

COUNTRY ELEMENT NO [EU SAD BOX NO]	DOCU MENT	ELEMENT NUMBER OF WCO EQUIVAL ENT	UN TDED MAPPING FROM WCO DM	UN TDED MAPPING FROM EU-COM	SUGGESTED UN TDED 2005 MAPPING	UC REFERENCE	DATA ELEMENT NAME REFERENCE	DATA ELEMENT DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
								The following definitions were taken from the EU Commission Regulation 2286/2003	
1	SAD	001	1001	1001	1001	UN00000311	Declaration		This is identical to the EU SAD, down to the code list.
2	SAD	071, 239–245 (address)	3036	3336	3336	UN00000379	Consignor/Exporter	Full name and address of the consignor/exporter	
2A	SAD	072	3039	3337	3337	UN00000377	Consignor/Exporter No.	The identification number assigned by the competent authorities.	
3	SAD	**	N/A	1046	N/A	**	Forms	The number of the subset in relation to the total number of subsets of forms and continuation forms used. E.g. if there is one EX form and two EX/c forms, 1/3 will be entered on the EX form, 2/3 on the first EX/c form, and 3/3 on the second EX/c form.	Not required in electronic environment; hence not available in WCO DM
4	SAD	013	6061	1166	1166	**	Loading lists	The number of any loading lists attached, or of commercial descriptive lists where these are authorised by the competent authority	This data element makes no sense in an electronic environment.
5	SAD	228	6061	7240	7240	**	Items	The total number of items declared by the person concerned in all the forms and continuation forms (or loading lists or commercial lists) used. The number of items must correspond to the number of boxes 31 to be completed.	
6	SAD	146	6061	7370	7370	**	Total packages	The total number of packages making up the consignment in question.	
7	SAD	009 or 016	1097 or 1202	1004	1097 or 1202	**	Reference number	The commercial reference number assigned by the person concerned to the consignment in question. It may take the form of a Unique Consignment Reference.	

Рис.5. Инструмент в Microsoft Excel, который можно использовать для согласования данных: для сбора, определения и анализа данных

Why harmonize standards and data with international standards? Let me give one example. You want to send goods to Odessa? There are eight places in the world named Odessa:

— in US: US ODF (FL), US ODG (MO), US ODS (NY), US OSD (TX), US ZGY (DE), US ZOA (NE);

— in Canada: CA ODE (ON);

— in Ukraine: UA ODS.

Try to ship container to Odessa (Canada) using electronic data interchange system without UN/LOCOD. Unfortunately, this international code in utilized not in the full scope. Several organizations, like IATA or ICANN (The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) accepted only parts of this Code.

The research in US shows that over one hundred agencies use international codes having over 300 forms for trade. Single window allows reducing the required information from 10000 to 300 items. However, that is not all. For comprehensive operation of single window it is necessary to continue reducing required data elements, establish interaction between 23 federal agencies and continue to systematize data required by different agencies. It is also necessary to bring trade data coding into compliance with United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDED) and WCO Data Model.

Conclusion

Single window in international trade is an instrument for good government. It contributes to better efficiency of international trade and fight against corruption. Thus it contributes to better competitiveness of state amidst highly developed and advanced economies and helps to solve development challenges. World practice demonstrates that the single window may be established even in less developed countries. However it requires political will and clear decision at the highest level. Key prerequisite is the choice of strong lead organization at initial stage. This organization should coordinate the actions of other organizations. Don't forget that the single window is not a technical solution but a complicated organizing instrument. Single window is not only a technical switcher, but an intellectual system in which data elements from one document (form) may be used many times by other organizations in other documents. That is why international standards are so important as they create and support UNECE, WCO, ISO, etc. in defining data elements in structural relations. Best practices of developed states established the single window proves that the step-by-step introduction is easier in practice. You can start with one document (e.g. declaration) and then proceed with other documents, processes and organizations. It is necessary to use international standards from the very beginning when arranging interagency data share to facilitate transborder data interchange between systems in different states in the future.

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