



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

ASEAN Single Window Preparedness Survey Workshop
Hanoi, Vietnam (June 1-2, 2007)



A workshop to present preliminary results of a survey of ASEAN Member Country preparedness to implement national single windows took place in Hanoi June 1 and 2. National single windows will eventually work together to create the ASEAN Single Window. The Chairman of the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee, Alexander Arevalo, Deputy Commissioner of Customs of the Philippines kicked off the session by declaring, "The ASEAN Single Window (ASW) is big time. We want to be the first, the best and the fastest." Arevalo continued, "We must have a culture of results, not just perfect agreements or documents." Pointing to the ASEAN Economic Ministers' declaration to create an ASEAN Single Window (ASW) and Finance Ministers' agreement to an implementation protocol, Arevalo asserted that all ASEAN Member Countries have the necessary political backing to take action. Implementation is a technical issue, he claimed.

Nathan Associates partner, Dagang Net, made presentations, which included an overview of the methodology from the project leader and reports on the state of play in most Member Countries from the Dagang consultant team.

The questionnaire template covered the following issues:

- (a) The vision of the national single window and organization for implementation (e.g. creation of a steering committee);
- (b) Technical issues (communication protocol, messaging standards, certificate authority, compliance audit);
- (c) Human resources and training (workshops and training requirements);
- (d) Business processes (electronic customs declaration or import/export permits, paperless processing);
- (e) Legislation (cyber laws, legislation that supports single window activities, e.g. information exchange); and
- (f) Existing e-commerce environment (other e-commerce initiatives underway).

Variations of this questionnaire were to be filled out by national customs authorities and other government agencies participating in the single window. Abbreviated questionnaires were also to be provided to representatives of the transport, banking and trade communities.

Preliminary survey results based on reports from the consultants portrayed an uneven picture. The Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have active steering committees that are already organizing national single windows. Vietnam is considering the single window in the broader context of its major customs modernization project. Singapore already has a form of a single window, TradeNet, which will undergo updates later this year. At the time of the workshop, Cambodia was in the process of establishing a steering committee, and Lao was beginning to give the issue consideration.

A review of the more technical elements of a single window suggested much work remained. While most customs documentation was electronic, other import/export documents were hard copy. Generally, the legal and technical environment was conducive to implementing an electronic single window, much more detailed work was needed. A major issue was lack of stakeholder awareness, with few countries holding workshops to get input from the private sector. Few countries had thought about the extra requirements necessary to join national single windows into an ASW, e.g. ability to exchange national information across border.

Arevalo welcomed the status reports which "confirmed [his] fears" of the significant challenges ahead. He said that the assessment, when completed, would be a worthy investment to help ASEAN Member Countries get on

track. The Chairman of the Working Group on Legal and Regulatory Issues called for more attention to legal details. He noted that it would take time to make necessary changes in Member Countries that already have detailed legislation on e-commerce. However, if in ASEAN Member Countries with only general legislative authority regarding e-commerce, there may be flexibility for agencies to adopt necessary regulations more quickly. In order to guide the work of the Steering Committee, the Chair requested a checklist of legal and technical issues that needed to be addressed in each Member Country.

The workshop was a useful first look at actions by ASEAN Member Countries to implement their respective single windows. Consultant reports were generally good, although in some countries, consultants encountered resistance from authorities to respond to the detailed questionnaire. The ASEAN Secretariat sought to allay fears of abuse of confidential information by pledging that the raw data from the questionnaires would remain with the Secretariat and be drawn upon to write a non-confidential summary report. Some of the delegates thought that some consultants were not talking to the most knowledgeable experts. The Chair asked that each Member Country provide a contact point to help consultants to be more efficient in their work.

In light of the comments of the meeting, the consultants will seek further information from Member Countries. The target date for completing the study is now the end of July. A final study should be ready for the Steering Committee's next meeting, slated for August.



ASW Preparedness Survey Workshop
Hanoi, 1-2 June 2007
Annotated Agenda

AGENDA ITEM 1: INTRODUCTION TO ASW PREPAREDNESS SURVEY PROJECT

The project team wish to introduce the ASW Prepared Survey project to the ASEAN Secretariat and ASW Working Group

AGENDA ITEM 2: SURVEY METHODOLOGIES

The project team wish to present the survey methodologies adopt for the survey exercise

AGENDA ITEM 3: CURRENT STATUS

The Project team may wish to brief the current status of the survey exercise.

AGENDA ITEM 4: SURVEY RESULTS AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED (AS AT 31 MAY 2007)

The Project team may wish to brief the ASEAN Secretariat and ASW Working Group on the survey results as at 31st May 2007 and problems encountered during the survey the following member countries:

- 4.1 Brunei
- 4.2 Cambodia
- 4.3 Indonesia
- 4.4 Lao PDR
- 4.5 Malaysia
- 4.6 Myanmar
- 4.7 Philippines
- 4.8 Singapore
- 4.9 Thailand
- 4.10 Vietnam

AGENDA ITEM 5: FOLLOW UP TO THE SURVEY RESULTS AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR ASW

The Project may wish to discuss the follow up of the survey results and recommendations, as proposed by the ASEAN Secretariat and ASW Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM 6: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The Meeting may wish to consider and adopt the report of the Workshop on ASW Preparedness Survey project held in Hanoi on 1-2 June 2007.