United States of America

Background

What motivated the establishment of your Single Window (SW)?

The US International Trade Data System (ITDS) was a result of a report of a special task force known as the "Report of the Future Automated Commercial Environment Team", the FACET Report. Among the recommendations specific to Single Window in the FACET report were the use of the same data for import and export, and integrated government oversight of international trade. The FACET Report was issued at the same time as Vice-President Gore's Reinventing Government initiative. This initiative endorsed the integrated oversight concept that evolved into ITDS.

What year was it established?

ITDS was established in 1996. While this may seem like a long time for development, prospective Single Window users should not be discouraged. The ITDS concept was never in dispute. There are many associated issues (governance, control, funding, among others) that need to be resolved before Single Window development and implementation can proceed. The Single Window concept was further supported by the SAFE Port Act of 2006, which mandated federal agencies with a admissibility or licensing mission in international trade to participate in ITDS.

What is the current status of the facility (study, pilot phase, running)?

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is redesigning its current Automated Commercial System (ACS) and developing the new Automated Commercial Environment (ACE). ACE is a phased implementation for CBP and Single Window participants. Requirements for ITDS are being developed within ACE.

Establishment

How did the SW interface with already established systems (if any existed)?

ACE provides capability for agencies with existing, operating international trade processing systems (interfaced agencies) and those without any systems (operational agencies). For interfaced agencies, data is sent from ACE to the agency system for processing. Results and action to be taken is returned to ACE by the agencies. For operational agencies, processes are integrated into the ACE "box", where actions based on agencies requirements are determined by ACE.

Did any other SW model serve as inspiration or model?

ITDS was conceived and designed without any outside inspiration or model.

What process was followed in setting it up? Was there a pilot project?

ITDS conducted a limited prototype under the aegis of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) called NATAP – the North American Trade Automation Prototype. This was limited and involved Customs, Immigration, and Transportation but was significant in that, under NAFTA, Canada and Mexico also participated. Prior to the initial rollout, a brief ITDS (US only) pilot was conducted in 2001. Since that time, ITDS has become a business requirement gathering process, feeding those requirements

into the ACE development process.

What kind of training for the staff was required in the establishment and how was it organized?	For the rollout of ACE, there is training staff dedicated to training users. An important note is that training is required not only for government personnel but for trade community users as well. Training ranges from instructor led sessions to web based training and written documentation.
How long did it take the facility to become operational?	Since this is part of a much larger implementation of the overall CBP Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), it is difficult to protect the length of time needed for the Single Window to become operational.

Services

What services does the SW provide? What documents/ information/process are covered?	The long-range goal of the US Single Window, ACE through the incorporation of ITDS requirements, is to provide one electronic interface through which the trade submits all required information for all government agencies. This would cover all processes from advance screening and targeting (note the WCO Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade), release of goods (the transport and goods declarations) payment of duties, taxes, and fees, and post declaration processing. Efficiency for the trade results from the sharing of common data across multiple agencies. ACE is expected to validate licenses and permits issued by the appropriate Participating Government Agencies (PGAs). However, ACE is not expected to include the PGA licensing and permitting application processes.
How many transactions per day are handled? What percentage of total transactions?	In May 2009; 479,510 e-Manifests were submitted and 689,789 trucks were processed by ACE. Use of the e-Manifest is mandatory for truck shipments.
How many clients does the SW have at the present time?	There are 16,559 ACE accounts as of May 2009, including 1,859 Importers, 1,013 Brokers and 13,687 Carrier accounts. 550 users from government agencies also have access.

Operational model

How does it work? What is the operational model for the SW (describe the business process model)?	CBP is building ACE which incorporates the Single window requirements of the federal agencies. Through ACE, the trade will submit the required data which will be processed in ACE and shared/transmitted to the agencies for their purposes.
Who are the main clients?	Single Windows will serve both the Trade and the government agencies. These are commonly known to the U.S. as Participating Government Agencies (PGAs).
Which public and private agencies are involved in the facility?	In addition to the federal trade agencies, participants include the trade community consisting of exporters, carriers, importers, Customs brokers, freight forwarders, etc.

Business model

What is the business model? How is it financed (government, private sector, private-public partnership)?	ITDS is funded through appropriations as part of the development of the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), the new CBP system.
What were the costs of establishment of the facility?	Since costs are part of the larger development of ACE, it is difficult to isolate the costs of ITDS.
What was the difference between estimated costs and real costs?	Unknown
What are the ongoing operational costs (annual)?	Since costs are part of the larger development of ACE, it is difficult to isolate the costs of ITDS.
What are the user fees (if any) and annual revenue? Model of payment (fixed price per year, price per transaction, combination, other model)?	No user fees are collected to finance ACE/ITDS. It is financed through appropriations.
How will the SW be sustained over the coming years?	It will be funded through appropriations.
Do the revenues generated cover operational costs or do they make a profit?	The US Government is not profit motivated. Cost benefit analysis reveals that there will be savings, not profits.
Are the revenues (if any) reinvested in the SW?	Not applicable.

Technology

What technology is used?	A mainframe application.
How are data submitted (electronically – what type of format/language, paper – what forms, combination – what kind of combination)?	ITDS data is submitted electronically using several message exchange standards; proprietary, EDIFACT, X12, and an Internet-based web portal. XML is being considered for the future.
Where are data sent and lodged (government or private entity)?	The data is sent and lodged with Customs and Border Protection.
Who can submit data (importer, exporter, agent, customs broker)?	Data is submitted from various entities. The carrier or carrier's agent submits transport data. Goods data is sent by the importer or agent (broker). US law is quite specific on who can submit the information.

Promotion and communication

How did you promote the facility?

Single Window is promoted through a variety of methods. The most effective is the Customs Modernization Trade Support Network (TSN). Within the TSN there is an ITDS Sub-Committee jointly chaired by government and trade. The TSN represents all segments of international trade in the U.S. Communication to the TSN includes monthly teleconferences, in person visits and web based communications.

Monthly board meetings and Program Support Group (PSG) meetings are held to facilitate communication to the agencies that belong to ITDS. In addition, each PGA has an ITDS liaison to serve as primary communication conduit.

How were all stakeholders kept informed about the facility's progress?

In addition to the information noted in the answer to the previous question, there is an ITDS web site: www.itds.gov.

What kind of training was provided for users?

Training was provided on site and at CPB Headquarters for government and trade users, as well as web based training.

Do you provide any helpdesk or customer service?

Customs and Border Protection maintains a 24/7 help desk.

Judicial aspects

Is use of the facility obligatory or voluntary?

The use of Single Window is voluntary.

Do participants need to sign a contract with provider/agency in order to participate?

In order to participate in automated processing, etc. trade participants must sign a letter of intent. Participants may develop their own in-house interface or purchase a software package from private vendors. All interfaces (in-house or private) go through a rigorous testing procedure to guarantee their ability to successfully interface with the government system.

Was specific legislation (or change of old legislation) necessary?

There is a specific group in CBP responsible for legislative review. In addition, each PGA is responsible for the review of their existing regulations to determine whether changes to mandate electronic data collections are needed.

How is the privacy of information protected?

Privacy of information is a critical issue. There are two perspectives in this area: internal within the government and external with trade users. When identifying their information requirements, agencies must cite both their authority to both collect and view the information. Agencies are able to access only that information which they have the authority to see. Trade users are able to access only that information pertaining to their transactions. Safeguards are built into ITDS to insure that users view only that information that they are authorized to see. Currently this is accomplished through passwords. Future capabilities will include policy key infrastructure and other security measures.

Standards

What is the role of international standards (UN/EDIFACT, UNLK, UN LOCODE, UN/CEFACT Single Window Recommendation, etc) in your SW?

International standards play a major role in Customs modernization and ITDS. CBP is a major participant in the harmonization and standardization efforts resulting in the World Customs Organization (WCO) Data Model and the WCO Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (WCO Framework). The WCO standards are based on UN Trade data Elements Directory (UNTDED) and UN/EDIFACT. The ITDS Standard Data Set and the ACE Logical data Model are mapped to the WCO Data Model. However, many users currently employ CBP proprietary data and syntaxes and ANSI X12. CPB will continue to support these messages.

Benefits

What are the benefits to clients and to participating agencies?

Refer to the answer to the next question, *"How did it benefit the trading community and the Government?"*

How did it benefit trading community and the Government?

Government and trade benefits are as follows:

- **Cost**: There is decreased cost of system development and maintenance. If agencies develop and maintain their own systems and traders must build to interface with this variety of systems there is cost; building one system is less costly.

- **Burden**: Providing information (electronically or on paper) to the government costs money. These costs are passed on to consumers. Providing data only once will reduce costs and the burden of reporting.

- **Accuracy**: Changing from one data standard to another, transferring information from one form to another, translating messages from one syntax to another is costly, but also results in errors. Some of these errors may be inadvertent. Others may be deliberate. Removing this manipulation of data will improve accuracy.

- **Efficiency**: Factors noted above will logically result in greater efficiency.

- **Simplification**: The growth of the various government systems, forms, requirements, etc. has resulted in over-complication and confusion. A Single Window will reduce this confusion and will simplify compliance.

What was the impact on Customs revenues?

There is little impact on CBP revenues since the US has an efficient collection mechanism. However, it is believed that a Single Window will have significant impact on a country's overall economic condition. This is due to the collection of accurate and timely statistical data.

What problems did it solve?

Governments often forget the public's expectation of what is expected from their government processing of international trade data. Citizens expect their government to protect them from unsafe

food, dangerous goods, environmental concerns, security and terrorism concerns, safe vehicles, etc. The lack of coordination among government agencies erodes the public's confidence in the government's ability to meet these basic concerns. A coordinated, integrated approach will improve the government's ability to meet the public's expectations. (Also refer to the two previous questions)

Lessons learned

What were the crucial success factors?

Refer below to the answer to *"What are the main lessons learned?"*

What were the greatest obstacles?

Change, or the reluctance to change, is the greatest obstacle to Single Window development. Through our lack of coordination and consultation agencies and countries have grown far apart on how international trade data is defined, sent, and processed. Companies and governments have spent money to develop these processes and are reluctant to spend the money to make the changes. The Single Window is a global effort (see below the answer to, *"How best can UN/CEFACT help with the development of the SW facility (standards, capacity building etc.)?"*).

What are the main lessons learned?

The crucial success factors are as follows:
- Leadership: commitment at the highest level possible
- Budget: commitment to provide long-term funding for the Single Window
- Technical: must respond to the needs of participating agencies and trade community
- Operational: buy-in to the process, cooperation, and operational vision

The factors shown above are also the greatest obstacles to overcome. Overcoming these obstacles through outreach, consultation, listening to the concerns, and responding to these concerns are the main lessons learned. It is also important to promote the Single Window from the international perspective. The trade community sees the value of international harmonization. Countries should be developing their Single Window in concert with activities with other countries.

Future plans

What are the plans for further development of the SW?

Plans for further development of ACE and ITDS in 2009 and 21010 are projected to be:

- Completion of ITDS Standard Data Set (SDS)
- Completion of ITDS PG message set for trade use (ABI format)
- ACE Releases for Ocean, and Rail e-Manifest
- ACE Release for additional Entry Summaries types

What are the biggest obstacles to further development of the SW?	See the answer to *"What are the main lessons learned?"*
Do you intend to make agreements concerning SW cooperation on the regional level?	The US continues to dialogue with Canada and Mexico to promote the Single Window in North America and is working closely with them to promote international standards. The US has offered to work with these countries in their Single Window development efforts. There is no plan to implement a regional Single Window.
Are you planning to have agreements for exchange of data with SW running in other countries?	ITDS will continue to support CBP in the WCO Framework.

Source for further information

Websites:	www.cbp.gov www.itds.gov
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