

Sweden

<i>What motivated the establishment of your Single Window (SW)?</i>	<p>Background</p> <p>Swedish Customs has a long-standing tradition as being the only public service at Swedish borders, performing several tasks for other public services such as the National Board of Trade and the Swedish Board of Agriculture. When the use of information technology increased, it was a natural process to involve all such partner agencies in the design and development of IT-systems supporting the overall process of foreign trade.</p>
<i>What year was it established?</i>	<p>The first initiatives of the establishment of a true Single Window were established in 1989, when Swedish Customs developed the Customs Information System for the export process and forwarding statistics electronically to Statistics Sweden.</p>
<i>What is the current status of the facility (study, pilot phase, running)?</i>	<p>Running</p>
<i>How did the SW interface with already established systems (if any existed)?</i>	<p>Establishment</p> <p>The development of Swedish Customs Information System was one of the first large scale business systems used by a public service in Sweden. Therefore, the interfaces developed were to be the “standard” to follow.</p>
<i>Did any other SW model serve as inspiration or model?</i>	<p>At the time of establishment not very many Single Windows existed, hence outside inspiration was scarce.</p>
<i>What process was followed in setting it up? Was there a pilot project?</i>	<p>The set up was managed by introducing different Customs procedures at different times, starting with export, then transit and finally import. Also the collection of revenue, simplified procedures and supportive systems such as the Customs tariff were introduced at different times allowing a staged set up.</p>
<i>What kind of training for the staff was required in the establishment and how was it organized?</i>	<p>Staff members were trained between 16 to 32 hours depending on the individuals role in the organization and the complexity of the sub-system introduced. The concept of “train the trainer” was used, i.e. super-users and teachers were trained centrally and then the staff obtained training locally.</p>
<i>How long did it take the facility to become operational?</i>	<p>The development of the first sub-system, export, was initiated in 1988 and at the end of 1989 the system went operational.</p>

What services does the SW provide? What documents /information/process are covered?

Services

The Single Window provides services for customers performing foreign trade with demands for licences where Swedish Customs has established a solution in cooperation with the National Board of Trade, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and also the National Inspectorate of Strategic Products. Regarding Norwegian and Russian Customs, Single Window solutions are operational for Authorised Economic Operators concerning the export procedure. Foreign trade statistics are extracted from the Customs declarations and submitted electronically from Swedish Customs to Statistics Sweden covering requirements for operators concerning statistical information. Regarding import VAT, the debts are paid to Swedish Customs that forwards the information to the National Board of Taxation.

Deliveries of Customs duties paid are done automatically between Swedish Customs and the National Debt Office and also the European Commission. For citizens, pets may be declared electronically over the Internet to Swedish Customs, also fulfilling the requirements from the Swedish Board of Agriculture. A similar solution is provided for hunters and other citizens needing to declare firearms and weapons, also where the requirements from the Swedish Police are fulfilled.

How many transactions per day are handled? What percentage of total transactions?

On a yearly basis, 94 % of all Customs declarations are submitted electronically using either XML or EDIFACT. The Swedish Customs Information Systems manages more than 100,000 electronic messages on a daily basis.

How many clients does the SW have at the present time?

Approximately 12,000 companies and 7,000 citizens use one or more of the Single Window services provided by Swedish Customs.

How does it work? What is the operational model for the SW (describe the business process model)?

Operational model

The customer submits information to Swedish Customs. Depending on whether the information is a requirement in order to perform a specific procedure, for instance a license, the information is forwarded to the relevant public service. If that is not the case, a Customs declaration is submitted electronically and selected information is extracted and forwarded to the responsible public service, for instance trade statistics to Statistics Sweden.

Who are the main clients?

The main clients are importers, exporters and customs brokers (agents). (Individual companies may not be mentioned due to national confidentiality acts.)

Which public and private agencies are involved in the facility?

The national board of taxation, the national board of trade, the Swedish board of agriculture, Statistics Sweden, the Swedish Police, the national inspectorate of strategic products, the Swedish national debt office, Norwegian Customs, Russian Customs and the European Union.

<i>What is the business model? How is it financed (government, private sector, Private-Public partnership)?</i>	Business model The Single Window was initially financed using dedicated funds from the Swedish Government. When new services are designed and implemented today, financing is done under existing budgets allocated to each public service respectively. Some initiatives are ongoing to use Private – Public Partnerships for development of new systems of great complexity.
<i>What were the costs of establishment of the facility?</i>	Due to the fact that establishment took place in 1988 – 89, figures are not available.
<i>What was the difference between estimated costs and real costs?</i>	Due to the fact that establishment took place in 1988 – 89, figures are not available.
<i>What are the ongoing operational costs (annual)?</i>	No figures are available since it is not possible to extract detailed costs from the overall operational, development and maintenance costs for the Single Window.
<i>What are the user fees (if any) and annual revenue? Model of payment (fixed price per year, price per transaction, combination, other model)?</i>	The services under the Single Window of Swedish Customs are free of charge. However some investments may be necessary for customers to be able to use the more advanced services, i.e. submitting electronic Customs declarations using EDIFACT.
<i>How will the SW be sustained over the coming years?</i>	A lot of focus will be on developing Single Window services for the enforcement process allowing for seamless interaction electronically with prosecutors, police, courts and other relevant public services involved in the crime-fighting process. Furthermore, services will be developed supporting Authorised Economic Operators, not least in the light of the ongoing reforms of the Customs procedures within the European Union. Naturally requirements and requests from the customers of Swedish Customs, i.e. companies and citizens, will be prioritized in the continuation of the Single Window.
<i>Do the revenues generated cover operational costs or do they make a profit?</i>	With no revenue, the costs are not covered per se. However, automated processes allow Swedish Customs to allocate resources differently, for instance working with enforcement or more complex matters.
<i>Are the revenues (if any) reinvested in the SW?</i>	Please see above.

Technology

<i>What technology is used?</i>	Different technical solutions are used based on the amount of information to be shared, how often it must be shared, if “push” or “pull” is used, and so on. Therefore it is not possible to give a detailed answer to this question.
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How are data submitted (electronically – what type of format/language, paper – what forms, combination – what kind of combination)?

Data are submitted electronically either using EDIFACT or XML, depending on the choice of the customer (customers who submit many Customs declarations normally choose EDIFACT). Paper declarations may be submitted and are then keyed into the Customs Information System by a Customs Officer (outside of office hours and during weekends at a fee of approximately 5 USD). All declarations, electronically or submitted on paper, are stored in the data warehouse and used for ex-post controls and Customs audits.

Where are data sent and lodged (government or private entity)?

Data are sent primarily to a private entity controlling the format, i.e. EDIFACT or XML CUSDEC. It also saves the original electronic message in a legal archive. Then the information is forwarded to the Customs Information System that performs automatic controls of the information submitted, risk profiles, tariff numbers and other qualitative controls. Swedish Customs then forwards (where applicable) necessary information to other public services.

Who can submit data (importer, exporter, agent, customs broker)?

Importers, exporters, agents/customs brokers, private citizens

How did you promote the facility?

Promotion and communication

Electronic services have been provided since 1989. During the last few years, specific groups of clients were targeted. For example, an export refund service is promoted towards exporters of foodstuff. Positive feedback by customers also helps promote the system.

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

The stakeholders, i.e. representatives selected by different customer groups, participate in joint committees initiated by Swedish Customs at strategic and tactical levels. At the tactical level, two joint committees exist, one dealing with the Customs process (for instance interpretation of legislation) and one dealing with R&D and ICT-issues. Through these joint committees customers and end-users of the services of the Single Window are actively participating in the prioritization of new services and are not merely informed.

What kind of training was provided for users?

Users have the possibility to participate in training sessions organised by Swedish Customs in cooperation with other relevant public services, for instance the Swedish Board of Agriculture regarding licenses and export refunds. Training is also provided for at The Virtual Customs Office where e-Learning covering different topics may be used.

Do you provide any helpdesk or customer service?

For the use of the Swedish Customs Information System and technical support, a helpdesk is available 24/7, 365 days a year. For questions regarding tariffs, procedures and the like, a call centre (CallCustoms) is available office days from 8.00 – 19.00. For urgent questions during other times or during weekends, customers may turn to a Customs Office or use self-services at www.tullverket.se.

Is use of the facility

Judicial aspects

The use of the Single Window is voluntary except for Customs

obligatory or voluntary?

declarations concerning the transit procedure, where electronic declarations are obligatory.

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

Each operator submitting electronic Customs declarations must apply to Swedish Customs. Detailed instructions and conditions are laid down for the use of the Single Window. If additional sub-systems are to be used, for instance transit, licenses or export refunds, a new application must be submitted. It is not a traditional contract but a set of transparent rules defining the playing field.

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

Yes, to allow for electronic document signatures, stamps, rejected declarations and similar issues. To submit electronic declarations, and for Customs to share the information with other relevant public services, amendments were made to existing legislation.

How is the privacy of information protected?

Each customer wanting to make use of the services of the Single Window is aware of exactly what information is forwarded from Swedish Customs to other public services when appropriate. Through this transparent approach the submitter of information is ensured that only the information necessary to perform the different tasks of two public services is shared.

When information is submitted, each public service respectively is responsible for the protection of privacy according to the Swedish privacy legislation, i.e. the same regulations apply but may be used differently; for instance Swedish Customs may forward information on a food stuff consignment to both Norwegian Customs and the Swedish Board of Agriculture but the Board of Agriculture cannot do this due to specifics in the applicable legislation even though the information is identical.

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

Standards

The messages used in the Swedish Customs Information System for submitting electronic Customs declarations are based on the existing standards, i.e. UN/EDIFACT, CUSDEC and CUSRES. Hence international standards have played an important role in the Single Window of Swedish Customs.

What are the benefits to clients and to participating agencies?

Benefits

Seamless processes, higher quality/less error, reuse of information and quicker handling from the public services are the main benefits.

How did it benefit trading community and the Government?

Less time, and hence money, has to be spent on submitting the same information twice to two different public services. This means that compliance costs have been radically decreased, an estimate of between 20 – 50 % depending on the prerequisites of the individual operator. Electronically shared information also means less errors and higher quality, meaning more fluent and seamless processes.

For Government, Single Window means that less time has to be spent on tasks requiring lower skills and possibilities to allocate

resources to processes or procedures that are more complex or not possible to computerize. One example is the Single Window for export refunds where Swedish Customs has decreased its time spent on documentary controls by 50 %, the Swedish Board of Agriculture has cut its processing time by 40 % and the customers receives the subsidiaries at half the time it took before the Single Window went operational.

What was the impact on Customs revenues?

Customs revenues have increased marginally but the main reason for the increase is that levels of proper collection were high even before the Single Window was introduced, almost 99.5 %.

What problems did it solve?

The Single Window solved a situation whereby more and more procedures cut across more than one single public service. By offering an integrated solution where information was submitted only once, smoother processes were possible to implement, benefiting all stakeholders. It also made Swedish Customs even more aware of risks connected to processes shared with other public services and today discussions on risk analysis and risk profiles are conducted continuously between Swedish Customs and other relevant public services.

Lessons learned

What were the crucial success factors?

To identify and offer efficient solutions for processes and procedures used by several customers creating the necessary critical mass. Also, listening to requirements and demands from the end-users has been a critical success factor.

What were the greatest obstacles?

One major challenge was to enable a technical framework that enabled SME's to participate in the electronic submission of information to public services. Therefore, priorities have been to identify services possible to offer free of charge, hence a lot of services are based on web-technology and/or text-messages over mobile phone. At the same time major customers, i.e. companies submitting several Customs declarations annually must be offered possible solutions to integrate with existing business systems.

What are the main lessons learned?

- Involve the customers, i.e. the users, in the design and development phase
- Focus initially on mainstream processes
- Use solutions for authentication that are flexible but still provide security
- Form a strategy based on customer's priorities. Large volumes will create benefits for the public services also
- Use interfaces that are understandable based on ICT that are affordable

Future plans

What are the plans for further development of the SW?

A lot of focus will be on developing Single Window services for the enforcement process allowing for seamless interaction electronically with prosecutors, police, courts and other relevant public services

involved in the crime-fighting process.

Furthermore, services will be developed supporting Authorised Economic Operators, not least in the light of the ongoing reform of the Customs procedures within the European Union. Naturally requirements and requests from the customers of Swedish Customs, i.e. companies and citizens, will be prioritized in the continuation of the Single Window.

What are the biggest obstacles to further development of the SW?

One area of concern for the time being is to reach even more standardisation while simultaneously remaining flexible. An important task is to create a level playing field with a high degree of transparency. Such concrete areas may be more standardisation regarding electronic signatures and electronic identification. Another area is the welcome work of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the recently adopted Customs Data Model that provides multinational operators more transparency when implemented, especially in harmonisation with the revised Kyoto Convention.

Do you intend to make agreements concerning SW cooperation on the regional level?

Yes, but the details cannot be given at this moment. The reason is that the European Union currently is redesigning the Customs procedures. One item that is going to be introduced is the Single Access Point, allowing for economic operators to communicate with one Customs Administration regardless of physical location of the commodities. A prerequisite for this to operate is Single Window.

Are you planning to have agreements for exchange of data with SW running in other countries?

Please see above.

Source for further information

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