

**REPORT ON
THE OIC SINGLE WINDOW MODALITY**

PRESENTED BY

**THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF TRADE**

TO THE

**34th SESSION OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL CO-OPERATION OF THE OIC
(COMCEC)**

**Ankara – Republic of Turkey
8 - 10 May 2018**

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SINGLE WINDOW MODALITY

⊕ Background:

In compliance with resolution n° A.7 of the 42nd Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC on Single Window and various OIC fora relating to enhancing Intra-OIC Trade, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat, the IDB Group and other relevant OIC Institutions organised events on the operationalization of the OIC Single Window in 2015 and 2016.

1. Workshop on “the Single Window Modality and E-trade and their role in promoting intra-OIC Trade”, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, 9-10 November 2015:

Following the outcomes of the OIC Meetings, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), organized under the auspices of the Ministry in charge of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco, a Workshop on “the Single Window Modality and E-trade and their role in promoting intra-OIC Trade”, in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, on 9-10 November 2015.

⊕ Objectives:

The major aim of this workshop is to share knowledge, experiences and best practices among the participants on the implementation of national trade facilitation programs and promote the development and implementation of single window & paperless trade projects in the OIC Member Countries (MCs).

This event also aims at taking stock of the current cooperation status of data exchange and harmonization among authorities in charge of foreign trade and discuss the possibility of establishing regional single window systems and trade information portals.

⊕ Axes of the workshop:

- State of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreements (TFA) ratification and implementation in OIC Countries;
- Role of Single Window in boosting Intra-OIC Trade;
- Regional and National Experiences relating to Single Window and trade facilitation;
- Round-Table Discussion on the role of SW in facilitating the implementation of the WTO TFA.

⊕ Participants:

More than 60 representatives of the following Countries, OIC Institutions and International organizations attended this workshop:

▪ Countries:

Republic of Cameroon, Arab Republic of Egypt, Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Turkey and Singapore.

▪ OIC Institutions:

- COMCEC Coordination Office;
- International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC);
- Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (ICDT).

▪ Other regional and international organisations and NGOs:

- Arab Maghreb Union (AMU);
- Arab Industrial Development Mining Organisation (AIDMO);

- World Trade Organisation (WTO);
- International Trade Centre (ITC);
- World Customs Organisation (WCO);
- Global Coalition For Efficient Logistics (GCEL);
- African Alliance for Electronic Commerce (AAEC).

⊕ **Synthesis of deliberations:**

After the opening ceremony, speakers from international and regional organisations and Member States made presentations in plenary sessions on various fields dealing with single window issues.

They demonstrated how modernized customs and border infrastructure and procedures benefit the public administrations and private sector through more effective and efficient deployment of resources, efficient revenue collection, improved trader compliance, enhanced security, integrity & transparency and reduced transaction costs for imports and exports.

In addition to political will and commitment, the importance of having a lead agency, strong linkages with international institutions, sound and sustainable financing arrangements and well defined objectives and action plans were listed as conditions for the success of National Trade Facilitation Committees, the collaborative platform meant to manage trade facilitation initiatives at a country level, in line with recommendations from international organizations.

OIC MCs are in different stages in implementing national Single window systems. Currently, 43 OIC MCs have implemented different types of single window system. It is worth to highlight that lessons learnt from the implementation explicitly have proven to us that National Trade Facilitation Committees are critical success factors to migrate to nationwide single window applications.

The establishment of the OIC Single Window for the benefit of economic operators of Member States could be an efficient tool for intra-OIC trade facilitation and enhancement through the involvement of customs administrations and financial institutions and could contribute to achieving the goals of the New Ten-Year Programme of Action (TYPOA) consisting of the increase of the share of the intra-OIC Trade to 25% by 2025.

Experts and representatives were of the views to:

- Developing a vision for the national Single Window - The Trade Facilitation Roadmap;
- integrating many different trade platforms;
- Identifying relevant national, regional and global trends that will affect national competitiveness in the future;
- establishing or increasing co-operation between Customs, Other Government Agencies and border control authorities in order to electronically share documents (data) and establish common procedures for processing and control;
- providing trade and transport operators with a single submission for trade documents and information to satisfy all import, export and transit regulatory requirements;
- Standardization of the single window data.
- Developing a master plan for the development of each trade platform:
 - Decomposition of challenge in sub projects
 - Structured approach to SW implementation:
 - Objectives and KPI
 - Process Analysis and simplification

- Document and data harmonization standards
- Legal framework
- Define different implementation phases
- Measure implementation progress
- Ensure stakeholder and policy support.

⊕ **Recommendations:**

At the end of the workshop, in line with the content of the agenda and as an overview of the discussions and exchanges arising from the presentations, participants took part in an interactive discussion aimed at defining a set of specific strategic actions to be taken in the short and medium term within the framework of the workshop on Single Window and e-trade.

In this regard, participants proposed the following recommendations:

a) General Recommendations:

- Affirming the important role of trade facilitation measures, single window, digital economy and e-trade in promoting intra - OIC trade, reducing the transaction costs of trade exchanges, attracting foreign direct investment, creating jobs and attaining the TYPOA of OIC Sustainable development goals of United Nations.
- Highlighting the importance of sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices among the member states for Single Windows and E-Trade related matters through utilizing the existing mechanisms of the relevant OIC Institutions (i.e COMCEC PCM, IDB Reverse linkage programme, etc).
- Acknowledging the progress attained by OIC Member States in enacting trade facilitation measures and establishing single window mechanisms at the national and regional level.
- Calling upon OIC Member States who have not yet ratified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) to do so in the nearest possible time.
- Calling upon the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the ITFC, the Integration and Cooperation Department of IDB and COMCEC to design projects and activities, in partnership with relevant partner international and regional organizations(WTO, WCO, ITC, UNCTAD, UNIDO, AAEC), experienced NGOs and companies (GCEL, Crimsonlogic,...) and stakeholders, aiming at providing assistance and capacity building to OIC Member States, especially in the following areas related to trade facilitation and promotion:
 - Establishing single window arrangements at the national and regional level.
 - Implementation of WTO TFA, conducting of needs assessment and scheduling of TFA commitments under its appropriate categories.
 - Drafting appropriate national and regional trade facilitation strategies.
 - Producing model guidelines on TFA implementation and single window arrangements.
 - Establishing International Trade Points and digitilization of procedures relating to facilitation and streamlining of importation and exportation activities, especially at the level of OIC.

b) Specific Recommendations:

➤ **National level:**

- Encouraging Member States to establish National Single Window and adhere to the convention IRT in order to facilitate international road transportation;

- Encouraging the share of experience between advanced national single windows and regional single windows.
- Encouraging other OIC Member States to work towards the development of OIC-wide regional arrangements on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade;
- Supporting and participating in the knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities of the ICDT, COMCEC, ITFC, AAEC, etc and related activities supported by regional and international organizations active in the field of trade facilitation;
- sharing lessons learned and the outcomes of existing bilateral and subregional pilot projects on the recognition and exchange of trade-related electronic data and documents with other members and associate members, and to initiate new ones;
- Considering entering into bilateral and sub-regional agreements on the cross-border recognition and exchange of trade-related documents as building blocks towards regional and global cross-border paperless trade.
- Aligning the administration of SW with the interest of its customers (importers/exporters) as stakeholders.
- Taking into account when establishing a national SW its inter-operability with other countries/partners' SWs.

➤ **Regional and OIC Level:**

- Assessing the possibility of establishing an OIC Single Window, an E-Certificate of Origin at OIC level, as well as enacting other proposals aiming at facilitating trade among OIC Member States.
- Setting an Expert Task force within Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) of the TPS/OIC in order to harmonize documentation data and procedures relating to Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs).
- Holding sensitizing events and activities of the importance of the WTO FTA and the establishment of SW in OIC Member States.
- Organising capacity building programmes in the field of WTO FTA for French, Arabic and English Speaking OIC countries in 2016 in order to facilitate the implementation of this Agreement.
- Involving World Bank, African Alliance of E-commerce (AAEC), Pan-Asian Alliance of E-commerce (PAA) and other centers of excellences of SW in organizing capacity building programmes for the benefit of the OIC Member Countries.
- Sharing experiences of interoperability of SW and implementing e-certificate of Origin (AAEC, ASEAN SW,...) in order establish an E-OIC Certificate of Origin by a pilot project of some countries.
- Launching an assessment study of the impact on establishing an OIC SW on reducing intra-OIC trade cost.

➤ **Designing a Pilot Project on the Establishment of an OIC Platform of interconnectivity of SW:**

❖ **Setting-up of a steering committee of the Pilot Project composed of :**

- General Secretariat of the OIC, COMCEC, ICDT and ITFC;
- WTO, WCO, ITC, UNECA, AAEC, PAA, GCEL, CrimsonLogic
- Representatives of the 3 regions of OIC

❖ **Terms of references or objectives of the steering committee:**

- Elaboration of a roadmap for the gradual implementation of the project;
- Elaboration of the terms of references of the project (definition of the value/benefits

and associated costs of the OIC Single Window and its impact on intra-OIC trade, design, legal framework, ...);

- Fund raising for the feasibility study;
- Selection of the consultancy cabinet for conducting the feasibility study;
- Preliminary validation of the feasibility study;
- Transmission of the study to the OIC General Secretariat and COMCEC for dissemination to all Member States;
- Holding of an Expert Group Meeting under the auspices of the OIC General Secretariat for the endorsement of the study;
- Implementation of the project (pilot project could start by the OIC Member States which signed and ratified the TPS/OIC and its protocols and those which have already a national single window).

2. The First Meeting of Trade and Investment Sub-Committee (TISC), Marrakesh, Kingdom of Morocco, 16 - 17 March 2016:

On the sidelines of the First Meeting of Trade and Investment Sub-Committee (TISC), participants requested to promote the Single Window Facility in OIC Member States and recommended the following:

ICDT, SESRIC and IDB Group to work together to design an integrated program on this issue including (survey, analytical study, collect and share best practices and capacity building program on Single Window in OIC Member States, while taking into account available technical assistance at regional and international levels.

3. Working session on the operationalization of Single Window Modalities on the sideline of the 2nd Forum of the OIC TPOs, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 23rd May 2016:

The 2nd Forum of the OIC Trade Promotion Organs (TPOs) was organised by the OIC General Secretariat and ICDT in close cooperation of the Ministry of Trade and Investment of KSA in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 23 May 2016.

The Forum was attended by representatives of trade promotion organs from 31 Member States namely: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Uganda and United Arab Emirates. The representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, ICDT, SESRIC, IDB Group (ITFC and ICIEC), ICCIA and the International Trade Center (ITC) and International Islamic Center for Reconciliation and Arbitration (IICRA) also attended the Forum.

Participants recommended the following:

- ✓ To establish National Single Window (SW) and to interoperate them at bilateral and regional levels (e.g. an E-Certificate of Origin at OIC level) aiming at facilitating trade among OIC Member States;
- ✓ To conduct a survey on the state of play of SW in the OIC Countries and to identify best practices to share;
- ✓ To organize regional workshops and seminars to highlight the importance of the Single Window facility for intra-OIC trade as well as to encourage and promote the implementation of required steps for the full implementation of the Single Window facility in the OIC countries.

4. Regional seminar on “the WTO trade facilitation agreement and the prospects of activating the OIC single window” for the benefit of the member states of the African Countries: Casablanca - kingdom of Morocco, 30 May-01 June 2016.

Context:

Within the framework of the implementation of technical assistance to the OIC Member States on WTO issues, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Department of Cooperation and Integration of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organized in collaboration with the Ministry in Charge of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco a Regional Seminar on "WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and prospects for operationalization of OIC Single Windows for the benefit of the OIC African Member States" from 30 May to 1 June 2016 in Casablanca, Morocco.

Objective:

The objective of this seminar is to sensitize the public and private sectors of OIC Member States of the importance of the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and its impact on the development of foreign trade among Member States on the one hand, and to share experiences and best practices regarding the implementation of national trade facilitation programs on the other, in particular the establishment and the strengthening of national Single Windows of Foreign Trade and the interoperability between those Single Windows.

Participants:

The following countries took part in this seminar: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia.

The following international organizations also participated namely: the ICDT, the IDB (Department of Cooperation and Integration), the African Alliance for Electronic Commerce (AAEC), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Regional Office of the Economic Commission for Africa (Rabat).

Axes of the Seminar:

The experts presented the following topics:

- Overview of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
- Implementation of the WTO TFA;
- Other regional and international tools for trade facilitation;
- National experiences of the implementation of WTO TFA (Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali, Egypt, Tunisia, Burkina Faso);
- Creation measures of a National Single Windows (national experience: Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali);
- The role of regional and international organizations in assisting the implementation of national and regional Single Windows;
- The cooperation between the customs authorities in facilitating cross-border procedures.

After the presentations, participants asked questions on the process of ratification of the Protocol of Amendment of the TFA, the notifications of Categories A, B and C, the ways and means to develop the technical assistance projects, the impact of TFA on national economies, those responsible for the implementation of the Agreement, the involvement and support

of the industry in the implementation of TFA and the rising awareness at national and regional level.

Recommendations:

After a fruitful discussion, the participants proposed the following recommendations:

- **WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement**

- Organise a meeting of Customs administrations of the OIC countries;
- Duplicate the organization of regional awareness raising seminars on WTO TFA to accelerate the ratification of its protocol of amendment;
- Organize a regional sensitization seminar for the benefit of Employer's Federations of OIC countries in order to assist companies in understanding and showing compliance with regulatory and procedural requirements of cross-border business operations;
- Establish an OIC task force of the National Trade Facilitation Committees to contribute to the development of intra-OIC trade.

- **Single Window of Foreign Trade:**

- Implement a program of technical assistance and sharing of experience in the creation of Single Windows between the developed countries of the OIC and other Member States;
- Encourage countries to establish national single windows with a vision of regional cooperation in collaboration with the OIC institutions, ITC, WCO, AAEC and other development partners (World Bank, ADB, BADEA) and other institutions such as WAEMU, ECOWAS, CEMAC, COMESA... to take into account the requirements arising from the WTO Agreement as well as regulatory barriers in transport and logistics services;
- Initiate a pilot project of interoperability of national Single Windows with the countries that have already ratified the SPC-OIC Agreement and conduct its extension to a second phase with other Member States;
- Request from the participating Member States to fill the Single Windows questionnaire and to send it back to ICDT for the preparation of an assessment report in terms of technical assistance requirements.

Organizers distributed to all participants Certificates and CD's containing the presentations of the experts.

5. Preparation of the Survey of OIC Single Window:

- ICDT prepared a draft questionnaire send to SESRIC, UNCTAD and ITC for consideration;
- The questionnaire was distributed to participants in the seminar on WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and operationalization of OIC Single Window end of May 2016;
- The questionnaire will be forwarded officially to OIC Member States in due course.

6. 5th Edition of the International Conference on Single Windows, 5-7 September 2016, Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco:

Under the High Patronage of His Majesty Mohamed the Sixth, May God Glorify and Bless Him, the Ministry of Equipment, Transport and logistics and the Ministry in Charge of Foreign Trade, in partnership with the National Single Window of Foreign Trade "PORTNET", the National Ports Agency and the African Alliance for Electronic Commerce, organized the fifth edition of the International Single Window Conference, from 5th to 7th

September 2016 at “Palais des Congrès” in Marrakech under the theme : “virtual single window of foreign trade: the requirement of an inclusive collaboration”

The Organization of this edition is part of a continuing effort undertaken by all public and private stakeholders in improving the business environment.

These efforts are based on the consideration of the latest trends in facilitation and electronic services, in order to allow a better international trade flow and to improve the competitiveness of enterprises.

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) as an institutional partner was represented by:

- Dr. El Hassane HZAINE, Director General;
- and M. Amadou Ciré SALL.

More than 33 international and regional organizations, 5 African ministers, 70 distinguished speakers, 40 exhibitors multi sectors, 1000 participants from over 18 countries from all continents attended this great international event of the history of the single window of foreign trade.

This major international event brought together the single windows of the following countries: Benin (SEGUB), Cameroon (GUCE), Cote d’Ivoire (GUCE), Congo (GUOT), Ghana (GcNet), Kenya (Kentrade), Madagascar (GasyNet), Morocco (PortNet) and Senegal (GAINDE 2000).

The objectives of the conference were:

- To Enhance the quality and efficiency of services provided through the different border crossing points (maritime, aerial and terrestrial);
- To Discuss the latest innovative solutions;
- To Share experiences and to better coordinate efforts in this area.

The main recommendations of the International Conference on Single Windows are to:

1. Build a SW impact assessment tool;
2. Implement international standards and harmonization;
3. Set up a consultation framework for a national dialogue intended for more inclusion among the parties.

Within the framework of the follow-up of the implementation of the ACMOI and TISC resolutions, the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) and PORTNET S.A., - National Single Window of Foreign Trade Procedures of the Kingdom of Morocco, agreed to cooperate in the development of practical tools aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Single Window system in the OIC Member States.

The mission consists in setting up all the necessary preconditions for the deployment of the Single Window, particularly through a Practical guide containing: the operating framework, the objectives, the service offer (including the creation of a reception, information and guidance service and the tools relating to the Single Window).

The mission also includes the training of the future Single Window operators on the personalized approach and the personalization of the service to be provided, as well as on the implementation of the Single Window service offering and the use of its tools.

It is therefore necessary to revitalize all countries that have not yet set up a Single Window system around a common project in order to help them to operationalize its implementation.

For this purpose, ICDT and PORTNET S.A will join their efforts to prepare an analysis report on the progress of the deployment of the Single Window in the OIC Member States, highlighting the analysis of each country's feedback and the classification of experiences according to their level of maturity.

As a result of this analysis, a summary document will be presented detailing the points below:

- Mapping of states according to the maturity of the deployment of the Single Window;
- Constraints encountered;
- Recommendations and areas for improvement in order to advance the work on the implementation of the Single Windows.

Once the diagnosis has been established, training will be provided to the Single Window operators, which will be based on the following points:

1. Presentation of the benchmark;
2. Presentation of the study and analysis conducted;
3. Discuss the experiences of the countries participating in the training;
4. Simulation of a practical case.

The preliminary outcomes of the study are scheduled to be represented to the workshop on "Operationalization of Single Window and implementation of Trade Facilitation Agreement in Arab Countries" which will be organized by ICDT in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 16-18 April 2017.