Toward a Cross-Border Paperless Trading Environment – Actions

Contact: Vivien B. L. Wang
Email: mailto:dgt40@dgt.gov.tw

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TOWARD A CROSS-BORDER PAPERLESS TRADING ENVIRONMENT—ACTIONS FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Reported by Chinese Taipei

1. Project Background

i) Creating a paperless trading environment will facilitate trading processes, reduce trading costs, and increase trading opportunities. Through the 1998 APEC Blueprint for Action on e-Commerce, member economies are committed to a goal of achieving “Paperless Trading,” where possible, by 2005 for developed economies and 2010 for developing economies. Ministers have attached great priority to this work and have listed it as a priority item. In 2001, Ministers encouraged each member economy to present, on a voluntary basis, its Paperless Trading IAPs as a means of ensuring that APEC can establish a paperless trading environment, according to the goals specified in the Blueprint.

ii) While preparing its “Paperless Trading IAP”, Chinese Taipei has discovered that APEC may need to identify in detail the various problems that must be resolved for the cross-border exchange of e-trade documents and to undertake capacity building programs and experimental pilot programs before a cross-border paperless trading environment can be established. Therefore, Chinese Taipei proposes to host a seminar/symposium in order to explore the issues and identify possible cooperative programs as the initial step for establishing a cross-border paperless trading environment. The seminar/symposium will also provide a platform to discuss the Australia’s pathfinder initiatives on “Streaming Cross-Border Flow of Goods Through E-commerce” and Japan’s initiative on “Trade Facilitation”.

iii) This project is considered to be a joint project by CTI and ECSC, and is co-sponsored by Chinese Taipei; Australia; Hong Kong, China; Japan and Singapore. At the 2nd CTI meeting this year, the project was endorsed and subsequently BMC also approved its budget request in July.

2. Objectives and Strategies

The objective of this project is to ensure that every member economy is appropriately equipped to participate in the paperless trading process and benefit from the opportunities presented by an increasingly networked environment. Specific strategy of this project is conducting a symposium to fortify sharing the experience of establishing a domestic paperless trading environment with a view to identifying the existing
cross-border issues that must be overcome in order to accomplish cross-border exchange of e-trade documents.

3. *Project Implementation*

Establishing a cross-border paperless trading environment may involve the following issues:

i) Categorized by the areas of trade process:
   - Trade administration
     ---- Import/export licenses
     ---- Quarantine and health documentation
     ---- Certificates of Origin
     ---- Standards Certification
     ---- Other Government Documents
   - Customs clearance
     ---- Customs documents
     ---- Electronic Carnet
     ---- Payment of taxes and levies on traded goods
     ---- Dangerous goods reports
   - International transportation
     ---- Ports and airports documentation
     ---- Manifest to regulatory authorities
     ---- Bills of lading
     ---- Arrival notice advice
     ---- Insurance certificates
   - Financial settlement
     ---- Purchase order
     ---- Letters of credit
     ---- Payment order
     ---- Remittance advice

ii) Categorized by the nature of actions:
   - Simplification and harmonization of customs procedure
   - Standardization of common data elements and format
   - Cross-border exchange and mutual recognition of official trade related e-documents
     ---- Technical issues
     ---- Legitimate issues
   - Establishment of a common framework for the exchange of trade related e-documents among the private sector
     ---- Technical issues
     ---- Legitimate issues

iii) Participation:

Public sector authorities would be invited to:
- Present their economies’ current status of paperless trading environment at the symposium
- Identify priority areas needed for capacity building projects
- Recommend experts on paperless trading in their economies
● Participate in the discussion of technical and legitimate issues on cross-border document exchange
● Discuss the ways to put forward mutual recognition of public authorities related e-trade documents

Private sector experts would be invited to:
● Participate in the symposium discussion to help identify the issues
● Participate in the discussion of technical and legitimate issues on cross-border document exchange
● Discuss the establishment of a common framework for exchange of B2B e-trade documents
● Contribute their expertise by joining the issue-specific capacity building programs

4. **Timeframe**

● May 2002: Coordinate with ECSG to seek inputs from SCCP, TEL WG and TPT WG.
● May 2002: Present the budget proposal to CTI2 and report to MRT and SOM2
● June 2002: Submit the budget application to BMC by CTI
● August 2002: Seek inputs from SCCP, TEL WG, and TPT WG for implementation of the initiative
● October 2002: Report to the Ministerial Meeting
● February 2003: Discuss the agenda and its implementation of the symposium at CTI and ECSG7
● June 2003: Report to MRT
● 24-26 June 2003: Conduct the symposium
● August 2003: Present the deliverable and recommendation for further actions at ECSG8
● November 2003: Report to AMM

5. **Conclusion**

Chinese Taipei will keep members informed of the latest development and welcomes the comments/recommendations from the members. Chinese Taipei also cordially invites interested members to participate in the proposed symposium.