

## SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

# Tripartite Agreement Signed to Fast Track - TNSWSP Implementation

**A**s per the decision taken by the Cabinet of Ministers dated 29<sup>th</sup> December 2025, Trade National Single Window System Project achieved a key milestone in April 2026 with the signing of a Tripartite Agreement between the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Digital Economy, and GovTech. The agreement formalizes collaboration to accelerate implementation of the TNSWSP, a flagship digital trade facilitation initiative of Ministry of Finance (MoF) aimed at simplifying cross-border procedures for importers and exporters.

To fast-track execution, the three parties have defined complementary roles. As the Executing Agency (EA) and project owner, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development take the policy leadership and overall coordination while empowering Department of Trade and Investment Policy (DTIP) as the Implementing Agency (IA). Since the DTIP established a separate dedicated Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in 2024, PIU is responsible for the entire project implementation with the policy direction and guidance from MoF and DTIP. MoF will drive regulatory alignment suitable for NSW system, chair the Project Implementation Committee (PIC), High Level Steering Committee (HLSC) and provide required policy direction and resources for successful project implementation.



Ministry of Digital Economy (MoDE), look after the Digital transformation oversight. The Ministry will provide policy guidance on data governance and standardization, interoperability, cyber security, and digital public infrastructure, while coordinating with other government IT initiatives in line with the government’s digitalization agenda. Further to the above MoDE responsible for obtaining required technical assistance and to obtain consultancy support from UNCTAD during the integration of Customs ASYCUDA system with Other Government Agencies (OGAs) as appropriate.

GovTech work as the technical implementation partner and closely working with the PIU for NSW system developer. Initially, GovTech is responsible to develop the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and complete the entire system architecture and solution design including workflows, data flows, and integration framework for TNSWS. Then, they will lead system design, development, integration, and rollout with the close coordination and collaboration with PIU.

The MVP will digitize end-to-end export procedures for these sectors, from application to approvals and certificates, connecting key agencies through a single online platform. Similarly, the Other Government Agencies (OGAs) will integrate with the government payment gateway; GovPay for all trade related payments of NSW.



The tripartite model is designed to cut decision delays, unify technical and policy direction, and maintain momentum toward go-live targets.

### **MVP in Progress: Tea and Coconut to Lead Pilot**

As per the Government of Sri Lanka target on \$36 Bn export revenue at the end of 2030, it was initially decided to start with the exports. Thereby MoF has decided to focus on Tea and Coconut sector for MVP development based on the export revenue of year 2025. The project team is currently developing an MVP focused on two of Sri Lanka's leading export products: Bulk Tea and Desiccated Coconut.

Stakeholder consultations with the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB), Coconut Development Authority (CDA), National Plant Quarantine Service (NPQS), Food Control Administration (FCA) Unit under the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka Customs, Sri Lanka Port Authority (SLPA) and private sector exporters are underway to validate workflows and data requirements. Entire PIU and developer team is extensively engaged in developing the MVP and to reach the milestone as planned.



### **Next Steps: Prototype Launch Targeted for Early Third quarter**

The TNSWS team plans to launch the MVP prototype for piloting in late May or early June 2026. The pilot will test the platform with selected exporters and agencies, gather feedback, and refine functionality before wider MVP rollout to additional products and procedures.



The TNSWS is expected to reduce time and cost to trade, improve transparency, and boost Sri Lanka's competitiveness. This tripartite partnership marks a decisive step toward making that vision a reality.

**Neelakanth Wanninayake**  
**Project Director**  
**Trade National Single Window System Project**

# Sri Lanka Accelerates Trade Reform: Coconut Development Authority and Sri Lanka Tea Board Join the TNSWSP

Sri Lanka is globally recognized for two iconic export sectors; coconut-based products and Ceylon tea. These industries contribute significantly to earn foreign exchange, employment generation, rural livelihoods and national economic growth. The Government of Sri Lanka is implementing the Trade National Single Window System, a transformative digital platform designed to simplify, modernize and facilitate export, import and transit trade to further enhance trade efficiency. Sri Lanka's Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) Project, being implemented through the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development has reached an important milestone by onboarding two major export regulatory agencies: the **Coconut Development Authority (CDA) and the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB), in addition to 18 other Government Agencies** in TNSWS. This strategic inclusion reflects the Government of Sri Lanka's policy direction to simplify export procedures, reduce transaction time, improve regulatory transparency, and strengthen export competitiveness in global markets.

## Why CDA and SLTB were Selected for TNSWS?



Sri Lanka's coconut and tea industries remain among the country's most iconic and high-value export sectors. The key products include desiccated coconut, virgin coconut oil, coconut milk, coconut cream, activated carbon, coco peat etc. Sri Lanka's export earnings from coconut is USD 854 million for the year 2024. It rose to USD 1222 million in 2025. It shows an increase of 43% in coconut export revenue between the year 2024 and 2025. However, coconut sector targets to earn USD 2,500 million in the year 2030. Sri Lanka's world-famous Ceylon tea is exported to over 140 countries. Major tea export categories include black tea, tea bags, green tea, instant tea, value-added branded tea etc. When the performance of export of tea is compared between the year 2024 and 2025, the total revenue earned is USD 1,400 million and USD 1,500 million in the year 2024 and 2025 respectively. It shows an increasing trend in earning of foreign exchange in tea industry. These figures demonstrate why both sectors are ideal for TNSWS-based trade facilitation.



## MVP Approach for Developing TNSWS

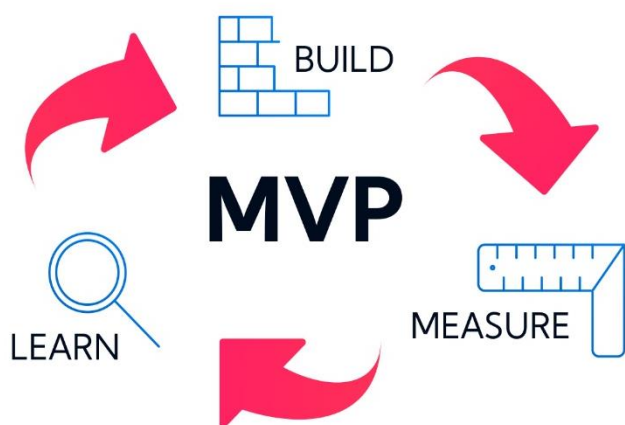
The Government of Sri Lanka has assigned Ms. GovTech Sri Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., a lead implementation agency for national digital transformation, for development of software for TNSWS. GovTech has chosen desiccated coconut and black bulk tea as minimum viable products (MVPs) for the development of TNSWS. Project Implementation Unit is currently developing end-to-end export process flows and BPMN diagrams for desiccated coconut (regulated by CDA) and black tea (regulated by SLTB). Desiccated Coconut and black tea as MVPs have a practical strategy because both products involve licensing, quality controls, export certification, multiple stakeholders, and high shipment volumes. Once the launching of MVPs is completed, GovTech will roll out the other products in the TNSWS.



## Trade National Single Window System for Exports

At present, exporters often deal with multiple agencies, repeated-document submissions, manual approvals, and physical visits. They submit documents to multiple agencies separately. It creates repeated data entry, long approval time, manual paper work, high transaction cost and lack of visibility. The Trade National Single Window System will solve these bottlenecks by allowing traders to submit all information through one digital portal. TNSWS will give the following benefits to the exporters.

- Faster Processing of export shipments.
- Digital workflows can significantly reduce approval timelines from days to hours for compliant exporters.
- Applications and approvals move electronically in the TNSWS.
- Lower transaction cost.
- No physical submissions, repetitive forms, & visits and less paperwork.
- Better Compliance of all users.
- Standardized documentation reduces errors.
- Better transparency of transactions.
- Exporters can track applications and status of approvals online.
- Stronger international reputation
- Modern digital border systems improve investor's confidence and global rankings.
- Increased competitiveness
- Faster exports improve buyer confidence and delivery timelines.



## Benefits to Government Agencies

The inclusion of CDA and SLTB into the TNSWS signals Sri Lanka's transition toward a digitally connected trade ecosystem. By modernizing exports for two of Sri Lanka's most historic industries - Tea and Coconut, the PIU is not only simplifying procedures but building the foundation for a smarter, faster, and globally competitive economy. There are many benefits to all Government Agencies by implementation of TNSWS in Sri Lanka and the direct benefits available to the CDA and SLTB are listed below.

- Better export statistics in real time
- Better inter-agency coordination
- Improved risk management
- Reduced fraud and duplicate certificates
- Higher inter-agency coordination
- Stronger policy planning for tea and coconut sectors



## Expected National Impact

The inclusion of coconut and tea sectors into TNSWS is expected to increase export efficiency, improve trade facilitation ranking, attraction of Foreign Direct Investment, supporting SMEs and rural producers, and strengthening Sri Lanka's export competitiveness.

## Conclusion

The integration of Coconut Development Authority and Sri Lanka Tea Board into the Trade National Single Window System marks a historic step toward modern digital trade. Beginning with desiccated coconut and bulk black tea, the country is setting the foundation for a smarter, faster, and globally competitive export environment. Sri Lanka is not only exporting products – it is exporting efficiency, trust and innovation.

**Dr. Issadeen Adambawa**  
**Coordinated Border Process Management Specialist**  
**Trade National Single Window System Project**

# What is Data Harmonization?

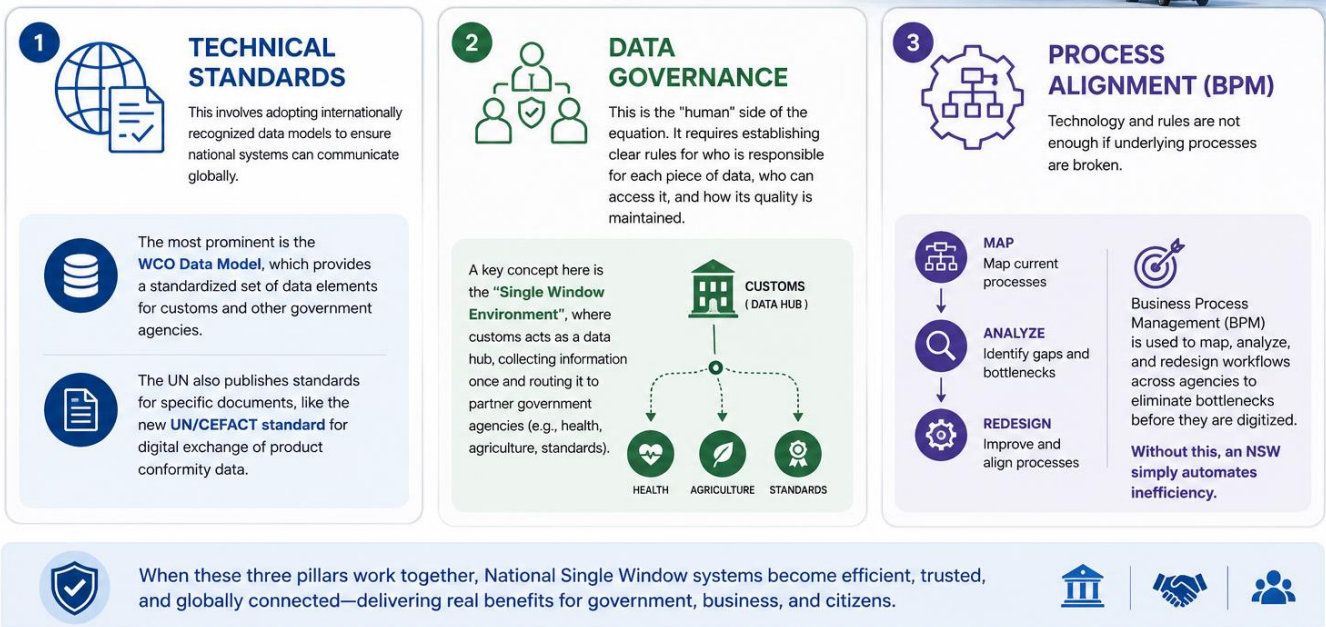
Data harmonization is the process of standardizing data definitions, formats, and values across different government agencies. Instead of one agency asking for "VAT number," another for "Tax ID," a harmonized system requires them all to use a single, common standard. This ensures that information entered once can be understood and reused by all authorized parties.

Think of it as creating a common language for trade data. This *eliminates redundancy, reduces errors, and speeds up processing by enabling automated, machine-to-machine data exchange.*

## The Core Components of HARMONIZATION

Harmonized data. Aligned processes. Smarter trade.

Successful harmonization typically rests on three pillars:



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Successful harmonization typically rests on three pillars:

#### 1. Technical Standards:

This involves adopting internationally recognized data models to ensure national systems can communicate globally. The most prominent is the **WCO Data Model**, which provides a standardized set of data elements for customs and other government agencies. The UN also publishes standards for specific documents, like the new **UN/CEFACT standard** for digital exchange of product conformity data.

#### 2. Data Governance:

This is the "human" side of the equation. It requires establishing clear rules for who is responsible for each

piece of data, who can access it, and how its quality is maintained. A key concept here is the **"Single Window Environment,"** where customs acts as a data hub, collecting information once and routing it to partner government agencies (e.g., health, agriculture, standards).

#### 3. Process Alignment (BPM):

Technology and rules are not enough if underlying processes are broken. **Business Process Management (BPM)** is used to map, analyze, and redesign workflows across agencies to eliminate bottlenecks before they are digitized. Without this, an NSW simply automates inefficiency.

Data Harmonization is key to national-level and cross-border-level interoperability. Here is an example where

the data elements in the Data Catalogue created through the BPA were analysed in order to identify the purpose they fulfil in terms of conveying information from the traders to the Government agencies and vice versa, and in terms of signifying stages in the process (e.g., approval, authorization, etc.).

Those data elements that fulfil the same purpose across agencies were identified and then recombined into a new single data model (the HDM). The Harmonized Data Model (HDM) is organized in 'Classes' where data elements are logically grouped together. This is in order to facilitate the future logical and physical database design.

Creating a new HDM affords the opportunity to align the data elements with international standards in order to facilitate both national-level and cross-border interoperability, we have mapped the new HDM data elements to their equivalent WCO Data Model data element. It is good practice to include in an HDM an Entity Relationship Diagram (ERD), which is a standard system design tool. The ERD shows the logical relationships between the data and is also an aid to future system design.



### Key Challenges and Real-World Context

While the benefits are clear, the path to harmonization is difficult. The table below summarizes common challenges and how countries are addressing them.

**K. Tharshan**  
**IT Specialist II**  
**Trade National Single Window System Project**

Challenge	Description	Real-World Example
Agency Silos	Government agencies often operate isolated IT systems and resist sharing data or ceding control, fearing loss of autonomy or oversight.	Nigeria's NSW is specifically designed to overcome this by creating a unified platform to reduce bureaucratic rivalry and streamline processes across multiple agencies.
Lack of Standards	Without clear, enforced standards, data is inconsistent, leading to processing errors and making it impossible to generate reliable trade statistics.	Pakistan is working with the WCO to align its national data with the <b>WCO Data Model</b> , ensuring interoperability with international partners.
Implementation Complexity	The technical work of mapping every data element from dozens of forms and legal acts into a single model is immense and resource-intensive.	The EU is developing a comprehensive <b>"EMSWe data set"</b> based on all Union and national reporting obligations, a complex legal and technical undertaking.
Resistance to Change	Automation reduces the discretionary power of officials, which can lead to resistance from those who benefit from manual, non-transparent processes.	The success of any NSW, as seen in Nigeria's case, depends heavily on <b>political will</b> and sustained commitment from the highest levels of government to overcome this resistance.

# Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN): Smarter Process Design for Trade National Single Window System (NSWS) Development

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the Trade National Single Window System Project (TNSWSP) has initiated a BPMN-driven approach to Business Process Analysis for the development of the Trade National Single Window System (NSW). BPMN provides a standardized, visual language that makes complex processes easier to understand, analyze, and communicate. Internationally, it is widely used in trade facilitation and Single Window initiatives.

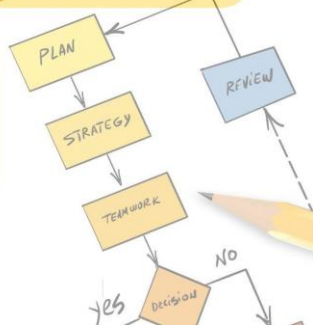
BPMN brings the necessary structure, clarity, and standardization.

Currently, PIU is focused on mapping existing (“As-Is”) export processes for the two selected HS Codes (Desiccated Coconut - 0801.11.90 and Non-Flavoured Black Tea Bulk - 0902.40.92). This effort brings together key stakeholders, including Sri Lanka Customs, Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA), Coconut Development Authority (CDA), Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB), Food Control Administration Unit (FCAU), and National Plant Quarantine Service (NPQS). By mapping these processes on a unified platform, stakeholders gain a clearer understanding of how their roles, systems, and decisions interconnect within the broader trade ecosystem.

The BPMN diagrams developed so far capture key workflows, including customs declarations, port operations, certification processes (Such as Salmonella Free and Physical Quality Certificate (CDA), Health Certificate (FCAU), Phytosanitary Certificate (NPQS)), and payments. They also reflect modern system interactions, including integration with the ASYCUDA platform.

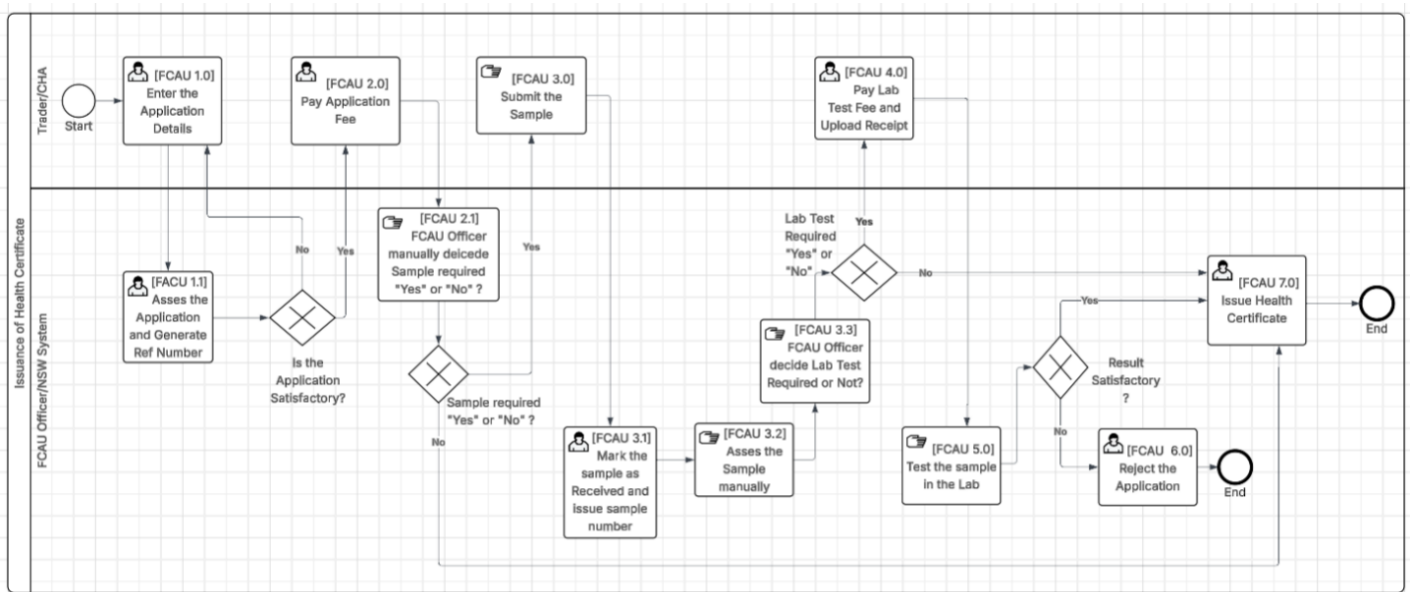
## BUSINESS PROCESS MODEL AND NOTATION

# BPMN



The development of NSW is fundamentally a process transformation initiative rather than just a technology project. At its core, it requires aligning multiple government agencies, traders, and logistics stakeholders into a single, coordinated workflow. To achieve this, a

**Poornima Kurera**  
**Senior ICT Officer (Development)**  
**Trade National Single Window System Project**



**The success of a Trade National Single Window relies not only on advanced technology, but also on well-designed and harmonized business processes. In this context, BPMN plays a critical role in effective Business Process Analysis and provides a strong foundation for future improvements.**

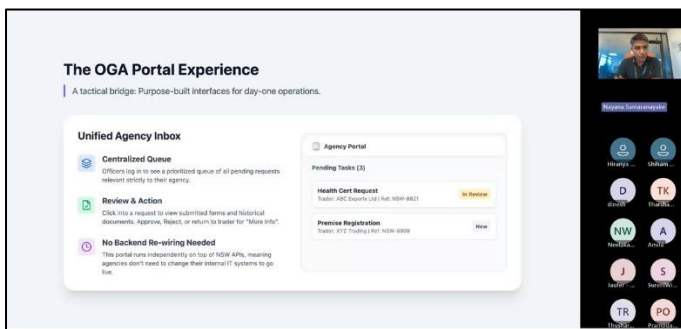
# Online Stakeholder Awareness Session

On March 27, 2026, the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) hosted a comprehensive online awareness session for its stakeholders: government agencies and the trading community, as part of their scheduled quarterly awareness agenda. The session served as a critical platform to update stakeholders on the project's strategic pivot: the juncture of system development, update on the legal & regulatory gap analysis & way forward, the initiation of Business Process Reengineering (BPR) and the rollout of the Change Management and Capacity Building (CM&CB) component.

## A Strategic Pivot to Agile and Exports

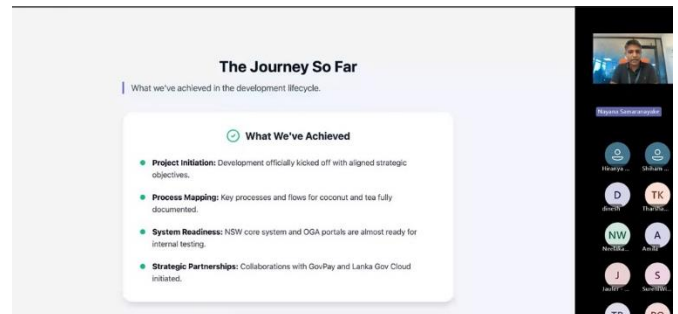
Mr. Neelakanth Wanninayake, Project Director of the PIU, announced a significant shift in the project's implementation methodology, moving from a traditional Waterfall approach to an Agile framework. He emphasized that this strategy focuses on developing a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to allow for iterative feedback and faster deployment. It was stated that the initial phase will prioritize Exports over Imports, specifically integrating two key new agencies, focusing on selected specific HS Codes namely: The Coconut Development Authority (CDA), focusing on Desiccated Coconut (HS Code: 0801.11.90) and the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB), focusing on Black Tea Bulk Non-Flavored (HS Code: 0902.40.92).

## A Glimpse into the System Gateway: Redefining the Trader Experience



Mr. Nayana Samaranyake, Technical Lead for System Development on behalf of GovTech, provided a comprehensive overview of the MVP stage, emphasizing a shift toward a user-centric "Success Engine" tailored for the trader community. Focusing initially on the desiccated coconut sector, the platform features an automated HS-code-specific checklist, unified consignment tracking, and a secure delegation framework for traders and customs house agents. By centralizing interactions with government agencies, the system enables parallel processing and iterative compliance while integrating seamless financial settlements. This transition from fragmented manual processes to a unified digital environment ensures that

trade operations are supported by a resilient, configurable, and data-driven infrastructure. The session proved exceptionally apt, serving as a proactive forum where both traders and government agency representatives present could clarify potential impediments and collaboratively address the operational challenges they foresee to align and resolve before the transition to ensure a smooth rollout.



## Supporting the Strategy to "Flip the Pyramid" with Change Management & Capacity Building

Ms. Sureni Wijesinghe, the Change Management & Capacity Building Specialist, outlined a comprehensive vision for the required transformation, addressing the limitations of current agency-related workflows. Building on broad preliminary assessments by Deloitte & ADB, she stated that the PIU will transition toward a more granular approach to identify specific needs and tailor implementation and stakeholder engagement.

To drive this shift, the PIU will mobilize "Project Champions" - dedicated individuals within every agency who will act as game-changers during this transition. The Change Management & Capacity Building strategy therefore, seeks to leverage automation to minimize transactional burdens where these Project Champions will serve as influencers and catalysts for team engagement and digital adoption. She emphasized on the key highlights of the upcoming phase which includes:

- Carrying out a Needs Assessment: Rolling out a targeted questionnaire over the next few weeks to identify specific operational "touchpoints" and support requirements.
- Customizing Programmes: Shifting from general assessments to tailored training programmes designed for the specific requirements of each agency & stakeholder groups involved in the value chain.
- Collaborative Design: Ensuring the transition is not a standalone activity but a collective effort fueled by input from core identified stakeholders in alignment with the input from the respective GA.
- Support Infrastructure: Establishing a dedicated support desk to provide ongoing assistance throughout the transition.

## Initiation of BPR with Asian Development Bank

Mr. Poornima Kurera, the Senior ICT Specification Officer from the PIU, highlighted the commencement of technical work related to Business Process Reengineering (BPR) which involves identifying and simplifying process flows for all require export, import and transshipment related regulatory certificates and payments to ensure a seamless digital gateway. With Asian Development Bank having formally agreed to take up the Technical Assistance for BPR to be completed within a tentative timeline of nine (9) months in four (4) stages: as is process analysis; to be process design, data harmonization, fee structure and revenue model, he requested all GA's and the stakeholders to extend their fullest corporation in this focused rigorous task.



## Update on the Legal & Regulatory Arena

PIU's Legal Consultant Dr. Thusitha Abesekara, summarized the progress made in aligning regulations with the new system. Addressing how these reforms support the mitigation of the existing legal and regulatory gaps to enable digital data processing and ensure smoother coordination between government agencies was emphasized.

## Work carried out by PIU thus far & the Way Forward

### What We Expect from You?

- Your coordination, cooperation and support
- Participating at discussions and meetings
- Providing required information
  - Process flows
  - Flowcharts
  - Regulatory HS Codes
  - Import and Export data
  - Forms, application, licenses, permits etc.
  - Payment system
- Comply with timelines



Dr Issadeen, Adam Bawa, the Cross Border Management Specialist, gave an overview of the scope explored during the current MVP phase with CDA & SLTB, with the identification of processes based on HS Codes. He emphasized that the success of the TNSWS depends on the active cooperation of all stakeholders. Moving forward, agencies and traders are expected to participate in detailed discussions and provide essential data, including:

- Detailed process flowcharts in line with the HS codes regulatory data.
- Current forms, applications and license requirements.

Ms. Pramoda Weeratunaga, the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, concluded the session emphasizing the strong call for all stakeholders for focused collaboration, positioning the TNSWS as a "Game Changer" for Sri Lanka's national trade ecosystem.

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**Change Management & Capacity Building Specialist**  
**Trade National Single Window System Project**

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