

SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

Cutting-Edge Execution of the TNSW - MVP Commencement

In a significant stride toward digitalizing Sri Lanka's trade landscape, a powerful multi-agency coalition has commenced the development of the Trade National Single Window (TNSW). This initiative brings together the Ministry of Finance, DTIP, TNSWSP – PIU and GovTech, to build a streamlined, transparent and efficient trade ecosystem.



The project has entered its first critical phase: the development of a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), by focusing on Sri Lanka's high revenue export sectors comprising of the Coconut Development Authority (CDA) and the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB).

From Concept to Reality

During a recent stakeholder session, the system developer presented an interactive mockup that served as a "proof of experience" to provide a firsthand look at the TNSW system's core functionality. This session was more than just a technical preview toward a more efficient trading landscape. Under the leadership of the Secretary to the Treasury, who has championed this initiative, key stakeholders engaged in hands-on demonstration. This session allowed participants to address possible operational queries, ensuring the MVP is robustly designed to support a seamless transition and provide a

scalable foundation for the future expansion of the National Single Window.



The Path Ahead

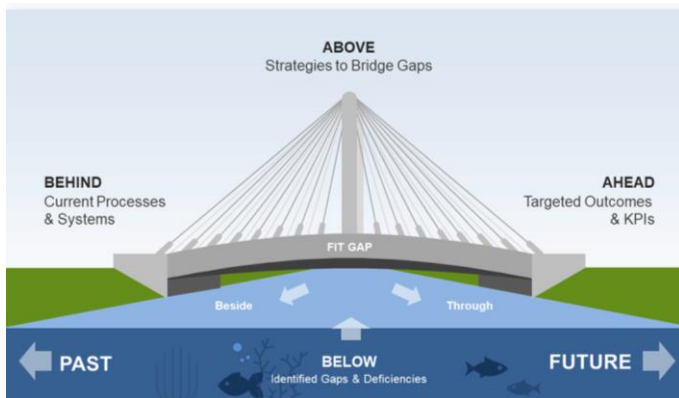
The collaboration between the Ministry of Finance, DTIP, TNSWSP - PIU and its technical partners signals a high-level commitment to reform. While the journey has just begun, the successful showcase of the exporter-centric workflow proves that the digital transformation of Sri Lankan trade is no longer a distant vision - it is an active, unfolding reality.

"This is just the commencement. Our goal is to empower every trader with a digital gateway that makes Sri Lankan commerce more agile and globally competitive."

Sureni Wijesinghe
Change Management & Capacity Building Specialist -
TNSWSP

Strengthening the Legal Framework for Sri Lanka's TNSWSP: Impediments, Gaps and Reform Recommendations

Sri Lanka has taken another significant step toward modernizing its trade environment with the successful convening of a **Validation Workshop on Legal Impediments, Gaps & Recommendations to Establish a Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) in Sri Lanka**. The workshop was organized by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the TNSWS in collaboration with the World Bank Group and held at the Courtyard by Marriott Colombo on January 08th, 2026. The session focused on reviewing and validating the **Legal Impediments, Gaps and Recommendations to Establish a Trade National Single Window System**, a critical pillar in establishing a transparent, efficient, and digitally-integrated trade facilitation framework in Sri Lanka.



Importance of Legal Gap Analysis in Establishing a Trade National Single Window

A comprehensive legal and regulatory gap analysis is a fundamental prerequisite for the successful establishment of a Trade National Single Window System. Since the system integrates multiple government agencies, regulatory authorities, and private sector stakeholders into a unified digital platform, it requires a **coherent legal foundation that supports data sharing, electronic documentation, digital signatures, and coordinated decision-making across institutions**.

Identifying legal impediments and regulatory inconsistencies enables policymakers to introduce targeted reforms that remove legal and administrative bottlenecks and ensure interoperability between participatory agencies in the national single window. In this context, the gap analysis conducted with the support of the World Bank Group provides a strategic roadmap for aligning Sri Lanka's trade-related legislation with international best practices in trade facilitation and digital governance.

Advancing Sri Lanka's Trade Competitiveness

The **Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS)** represents a transformative initiative aimed at simplifying cross-border trade procedures and processes. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the system seeks to integrate multiple government regulatory agencies into a unified digital platform. By replacing fragmented and paper-based procedures with coordinated digital processes, the TNSWS is expected to significantly **reduce administrative delays, lower the cost of doing business, reduction of delivery time, and enhance transparency in cross-border trade**. Ultimately, the initiative will strengthen Sri Lanka's competitiveness in international markets while improving the efficiency of public sector service delivery.

A Collaborative Multi-Stakeholder Initiative



The validation workshop brought together **over 75 participants**, demonstrating the collaborative nature of the project. Participants included Additional Secretaries representing the **Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC)**, officials from the Department of Trade and Investment Policy, heads of regulatory agencies and their legal officers, representatives from private sector chambers and trade associations, development partners and donor agencies, officials from the Information and Communication Technology Agency under the Ministry of Digital Economy and consultants from the World Bank Group. Delivering the keynote address, Mr. Manjula Hettiarachchi, Director General, the Department of Trade and Investment Policy, emphasized that the establishment of the Trade National Single Window System is a **major milestone in Sri Lanka's ongoing efforts to modernize trade facilitation and strengthen economic and digital governance**.

From Legal Analysis to Reform

The workshop marked the culmination of an intensive technical assistance phase supported by the World Bank Group. Following the project kickoff in November 2025, the World Bank Group conducted extensive desk research on existing laws, regulations, and administrative procedures governing trade and border management in Sri Lanka. This research was strengthened through detailed consultations led by M. M. M. Rishafy, Senior Consultant on Trade Facilitation of the World Bank Group, along with Dr. Issadeen Adambawa, Coordinated Border Process Management Specialist of the TNSWS Project Implementation Unit. These consultations engaged legal officers from all relevant regulatory agencies and relevant ministries to identify **legal barriers, institutional overlaps, and regulatory gaps** that could hinder the effective implementation of the National Single Window.



During the workshop, the World Bank Group presented the draft report titled **“Legal Impediments, Gaps and Recommendations”** to the participants for their perusal. The findings were discussed through interactive sessions and group presentations involving both government and private sector representatives. The participants also submitted additional comments and observations during the validation process to further refine the recommendations and ensure that the proposed legal reforms accurately reflect the operational realities of Sri Lanka’s trade regulatory environment.

Leveraging Digital Government Infrastructure

A key highlight of the workshop was a presentation by the Information and Communication Technology Agency on the capabilities of the **GovPay digital payment ecosystem**. GovPay serves as a unified digital payment gateway connecting government institutions, financial service providers, and merchant platforms. Its integration into the Trade National Single Window System will

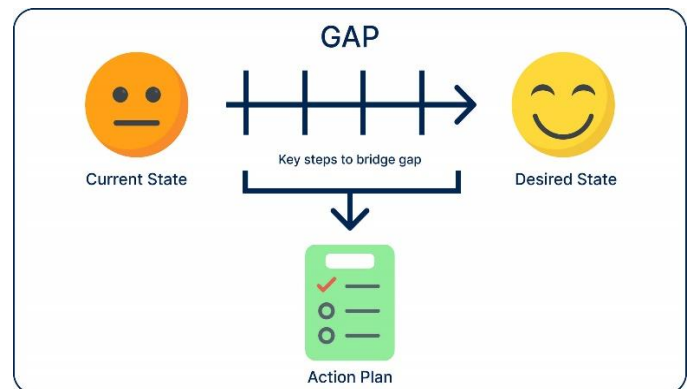
enable **secure, seamless digital payments for government services**, further enhancing efficiency and convenience for traders, exporters, and importers.



The Way Forward

Concluding the workshop, Mr. Neelakanth Wanninayake, Project Director of the TNSWS Project Implementation Unit, emphasized that validating the legal and regulatory framework is essential to ensure that the transition to the Trade National Single Window System is supported by a **robust and modern legal foundation**.

Participants were requested to submit final written comments by **16 January 2026**, after which the World Bank Group will finalize the **Legal Impediments, Gaps & Recommendations to Establish a Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) Report**. The participants submitted their final written comments. The World Bank Group will submit the finalized report to the **Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development** for consideration and further policy action.



As Sri Lanka moves closer to implementing the Trade National Single Window, strengthening the legal and regulatory framework will remain a **critical prerequisite for enhancing transparency, facilitating cross-border trade, attracting investment, and building a more competitive and resilient national economy**.

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

Sri Lanka Advances Trade Modernization: Key Validation Workshop Held for the Trade National Single Window Legal & Regulatory Framework

In accelerating the transformation in the nation's trade landscape, the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS), in collaboration with the World Bank Group (WBG), successfully conducted a validation workshop on the Legal & Regulatory Gap Analysis at the Courtyard by Marriott, Colombo 02.



The session focused on a comprehensive Legal and Regulatory Gap Analysis, a critical pillar in establishing a seamless, transparent, and efficient trade environment in Sri Lanka.

A Vision for Global Competitiveness

The National Single Window is a transformative commitment to the business community. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, this flagship initiative aims to overhaul the country's trade ecosystem by replacing complexity with digital efficiency. By streamlining cross-border processes, the TNSWS is set to significantly lower the cost of doing business and sharpen Sri Lanka's competitive edge in the global market.



Collaborative Governance in Action

The workshop saw a gathering of over 75 stakeholders, reflecting the project's interdisciplinary nature. Participants included the Additional Secretaries of the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC), Officials from the Department of Trade and Investment Policy (DTIP), Heads of Government Agencies and their Legal Officers, Representatives from Private Sector Chambers, Trade Associations, Donor Agencies, the Information Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) from the Ministry of Digital Economy and Consultants from the World Bank Group (WBG).



Opening the event, Mr. Manjula Hettiarachchi, the Director General of the DTIP, delivered a keynote address emphasizing the project's strategic importance as a national milestone.

From Research to Reality

The workshop marks the culmination of an intensive phase of technical assistance provided by the World Bank Group. Following an initial kickoff in November 2025, a dedicated Legal Sub-Committee from the WBG conducted exhaustive desk research into existing laws and regulations. This was followed by deep-dive consultations led by Mr. M.M.M. Rishafy (Senior Consultant, Trade Facilitation, WBG) and Dr. Issadeen, Adam Bawa (Coordinated Border Process Management Specialist, PIU) with legal officials across all stakeholder agencies.





During the session, the WBG presented the draft report on "Legal Impediments, Gaps & Recommendations." The findings were put to the floor for validation, sparking active group discussions and presentations from government and private sector representatives alike.



Further, the representatives from the ICTA presented the current capabilities of the GovPay ecosystem, emphasizing its role as a unified payment hub. By connecting financial institutions, organizations, and merchant networks, GovPay facilitates a versatile digital infrastructure. This integration allows for seamless government payments across multiple platforms, significantly enhancing the ease of doing business within the TNSWS framework.





The Path Ahead

The TNSWS, PIU's Project Director, Mr. Neelakanth Wanninayake, ending a very successful and a highly engaged workshop, highlighted that the validation process ensures that the transition to a Single Window is backed by a robust, modern legal and regulatory foundation and invited all participants to submit final written comments by January 16, 2026, to allow the World Bank Group to finalize the report.



Establishment of the Trade National Single Window System has great potential to streamline processes; enhance transparency; and increase competitiveness is involved with many challenges and risks. There are resistances to change from stakeholders, gaps in digital infrastructure, inadequate interagency cooperation, and need for capacity development. The challenges and risks can be mitigated through strong political commitment, stakeholder collaborations, robust legal framework and phased implementation. Project Implementation Unit has great commitment to determine the changes in order to drive the Trade National Single Window System on the correct track.



Trade Takes Centre Stage: Insights from the Dialog Business Secure Connect Summit, Kurunegala

Dialog ICT Business Unit remains committed to supporting corporate and SME customers across Sri Lanka. The forum brings together industry experts and key stakeholders to share knowledge on emerging trends and actionable strategies. It was a premier gathering of industry experts and stakeholders, discussed on emerging trends and strategies in ICT at Hotel Epitome, Kurunegala on Wednesday 18th February 2026. Mr. Neelakanth Wanninayake, Project Director, Trade National Single Window System Project invited as the Chief Guest/Keynote speaker for the event.



In his address, Mr. Wanninayake delivered a comprehensive keynote on "Digital Trade in Local & Global context - Opportunities, Challenges and Potential in Sri Lanka". He provided a snapshot of the Sri Lankan economy, delving into the country's digitalization strategy and highlighting major projects driving this transformation, with a special focus on the Trade National Single Window System Project, purpose and objectives, its key features, benefits for the traders and operational mechanism.

Further, the discussion underscored the opportunities, challenges, and potential of digital trade, including the growing trade in services. Dialog's ICT Business Unit reaffirmed its commitment to supporting corporate and SME customers across Sri Lanka through such knowledge-sharing initiatives.

The Trade National Single Window Project looks forward to continued collaboration and knowledge exchange to drive digital trade growth in Sri Lanka.

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