

SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

Ministry of Finance Signs MoUs with 18 Government Agencies to Boost National Trade Digitization

In a major stride toward modernizing Sri Lanka's trade ecosystem, the **Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with eighteen (18) participating Government Agencies (GAs)** on Tuesday, 24th June 2025 at 10.00 a.m. at the Randora Auditorium, Ministry of Finance.

These MoUs are intended to formalize the commitment of all parties and ensure the active support and cooperation of the respective agencies in the successful implementation of the Trade National Single Window System Project - a transformative initiative aimed at digitizing and streamlining cross-border trade processes.



The event commenced with **welcome remarks by the Director General of the Department of Trade and Investment Policy, Mr. M. K. Pradeep Kumara** highlighting the importance of inter-agency collaboration in enhancing Sri Lanka's trade facilitation environment.

Following the opening remarks, the **Project Director of the Trade National Single Window System Project (TNSWSP), Mr. Neelakanth Wanninayake** delivered a **brief presentation** outlining the project's **development framework**, key milestones achieved, and the **expected support and cooperation** required at the ministerial level to ensure effective implementation.

The MoU signing ceremony was held concurrently with the **first Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) Meeting**, underlining the importance of inter-agency collaboration in the project's success. Heads of the respective Government Agencies participated in the event as **Authorized Signatories**, endorsing their institutional support for this national priority.

L.G. Anuja Tillekaratne
Project Secretary – TNSWSP

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Need Assessment and Baseline Setting for Implementation of Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS)

Government of Sri Lanka and World Trade Organization entered the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2017. This agreement aims to streamline import, export and transit trade by facilitating, simplifying and harmonizing the border processes in Sri Lanka. As per one of the measures of this agreement, Government of Sri Lanka has agreed to establish a National Single Window to facilitate import, export and transit trade in Sri Lanka before 31st December 2030. Accordingly, Government of Sri Lanka has decided to establish a Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) as a single-entry point for submission of application, documents and information by the import, export and transit traders to fulfill border regulatory requirements in Sri Lanka.

Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) is an electronic entry-point that integrates 18 Government Agencies and 05 Private Sector Chambers that are involved with facilitating and issuing certificates, licenses, permits and recommendations (CLPR). Preliminary studies undertaken by Project Implementation Unit reveal that the readiness of 18 Government Agencies for implementing Trade National Single Window System is found at different levels and their requirements are different from each other. Also, information for baseline setting at Government Agencies for implementation of TNSWS is highly required. So, it is a basic requirement to assess the needs of the said 18 Government Agencies and collect information for baseline setting. Further, this assignment forecasts mainly on the dimensions of business processes, legal and regulatory environment, IT environment and human resource capacities of 18 Government Agencies that have been selected for implementation of TNSWS in Sri Lanka.



Department of Trade and Investment Policy has awarded a contract to Ms. Deloitte Advisory Services (Pvt) Ltd. to undertake a need assessment and collecting information for baseline setting for implementation of TNSWS for 03 months with effect from 18th June 2025. The overall objective of conducting the need assessment and baseline setting is to examining the current status of 18 Government Agencies and providing suggestions and recommendations for future improvements that align with global best practices for Trade National Single Window System briefly. However, the specific objectives of the Need

Analysis and Baseline Setting include the following areas broadly.

1. To identify the current status of each Government Agencies.
2. To study the existing Certificate, Licenses, Permits and Recommendations (CLPRs) issuing process in Government Agencies.
3. To identify the current laws and regulations applicable for each process of Government Agencies in cross-border trade in Sri Lanka.
4. To recommend the types of laws and regulations required to be amended or new laws to be enacted.
5. To review the existing status of IT environment of Government Agencies.
6. To understand the readiness of Government Agencies for Single Window development
7. To analyze the existing physical and human resource capacities and their gaps
8. To examine the changes to be done for establishment of NSW system, development and future requirement for the establishment of the NSW.
9. To set the baseline for project monitoring and evaluation.
10. To make recommendation for successful implementation of NSW System based on the suggestions and proposals by the Government Agencies, Chambers & international best practices.

M/s Deloitte Advisory Services (Pvt) Ltd. have submitted an inception report to Project Implementation Unit. This report includes a working plan and timelines of activities of Deloitte. Deloitte have completed meetings with 17 Government Agencies and 03 Private Sector Chambers and issued three questionnaires headed as Need Assessment General Questionnaire, IT Maturity Questionnaire and HR Capacity Questionnaire to collect information. As soon as the required information is collected from the Government Agencies, Deloitte will submit the final report and make a presentation to the Department of Trade and Investment Policy in the first week and the third week of September 2025 respectively. Need Assessment and Baseline Setting will provide information to take up the implementation activities of TNSWS in the correct path.

Dr. Adam Bawa Issadeen
Coordinated Border Process Management
Specialist - TNSWSP

The Official Launch of **OneTrade.lk** – Your Gateway to Trade Facilitation in Sri Lanka!

We are excited to announce the official launch of our newly developed project website – www.onetrade.lk – the digital home for the “Single Window” initiative, dedicated to advancing efficient, transparent, and integrated cross-border trade processes in Sri Lanka.

What You'll Find on OneTrade.lk

OneTrade.lk serves as the central source of information, updates, and engagement for all those involved in Sri Lanka's Trade National Single System development process. The website offers an in-depth overview of the Single Window project, including:

- **Project Background**

Gain a comprehensive understanding of the rationale behind the NSW initiative - exploring the global and local trade challenges that necessitated a unified digital solution.

- **Vision & Mission**

Discover the overarching vision of the project, which aims to position Sri Lanka as a regional trade hub through cutting-edge digital facilitation. The mission outlines the commitment to modernizing processes, reducing trade barriers, and fostering stakeholder collaboration.

- **Strategic Goals & Objectives**

Delve into the clearly defined goals that steer the project's direction-ranging from reducing time and cost for traders to enhancing compliance and inter-agency coordination.

- **Expected Outcomes & Key Deliverables**

Understand the tangible benefits anticipated from the project, including:

- ✓ Reduced clearance times
- ✓ Increased trade competitiveness
- ✓ Enhanced risk management capabilities
- ✓ Seamless stakeholder engagement across public and private sectors

- **Governance Structure**

Explore the institutional framework that supports project oversight and execution, with details on steering committees, technical working groups, and stakeholder representation.

- **Project Implementation Stages**

A breakdown of the phased approach being adopted-from initial assessments and stakeholder consultations to development, pilot testing and full-scale rollout.

- **Implementation Methodology**

Learn about the project's structured approach, which aligns with international best practices.

- **Partner Organizations**

A detailed list of all collaborating institutions, including trade regulatory bodies, private sector partners along with their specific roles and domain expertise.



Dynamic Features for Real-Time Engagement

The **OneTrade.lk** website isn't just an information portal—it's a living platform designed for **ongoing engagement, transparency, and collaboration**. Key interactive features include:

- **News & Updates**

Stay up to date with real-time news on project milestones, policy changes, international collaborations, and stakeholder achievements.

- **Upcoming Events**

Never miss an opportunity to engage—keep track of key forums, capacity-building workshops, stakeholder meetings, and technical consultations.

- **Public Announcements**

Access all official notices including procurement opportunities, job vacancies, public consultations, and calls for expert participation.

- **Newsletter Subscription**

Subscribe to the bi-monthly **OneTrade.lk newsletter** to receive curated updates directly to your inbox. Stay informed and engaged while helping build community awareness and involvement.

- **Image Gallery**

View an evolving visual archive of the project's progress - capturing highlights from launches, events, field visits, and stakeholder engagements across the country.

B. M. Vajira Gunarathna
IT Specialist I - TNSWS

 Visit www.onetrade.lk Today

Whether you're a trader, policymaker, logistics provider, or an interested citizen, **OneTrade.lk** invites you to become part of Sri Lanka's digital trade transformation. Join us in shaping a more connected, efficient, and inclusive trade future.

Development of “Functional & Technical Requirement Specifications and Preparation of Procurement Documents” for NSW system

We are pleased to announce the **official publication of the Expression of Interest (EOI)** for procuring a **Consultancy Service** to support the development of **Functional & Technical Requirements** and the **Preparation of Procurement Documents** for Sri Lanka’s **National Single Window (NSW)** system.

This marks a significant step forward in the development of the NSW system and main preparatory action for selecting and mobilizing a suitable vendor for design and develop the Sri Lanka NSW – Sri Lanka’s flagship digital trade facilitation system.



Recommendations, WCO Data Model, and ASEAN Single Window practices.

✂ Scope of the Consultancy Assignment

The consultancy firm or expert team selected through this procurement process will be tasked with delivering two major components that are vital to the successful implementation of the NSW:

1. Development of Functional & Technical Requirement Specifications

This component focuses on ensuring that the future NSW system is comprehensive, interoperable, and aligned with stakeholder needs and global best practices.

Key tasks include:

- Conduct a detailed analysis of the system’s functional needs across all relevant stakeholders.
- Functional requirement documentation - Define the key functional areas and use cases that the NSW system must support, including customs declarations, permits and licenses, cargo clearance, risk assessment, payment process.
- Technical Requirement Specification - Ensure specifications support interoperability, scalability, performance benchmarks and security standards suitable for a national-level trade facilitation system.
- Alignment with International Standards - Ensure specifications are compatible with frameworks such as the UN/CEFACT

2. Preparation of Procurement Documents

- Develop a comprehensive **Request for Proposal (RFP)/Bidding Document** in line with national procurement guidelines.
- Include a detailed **Terms of Reference (TOR)** outlining:
 - **Roles and responsibilities** of the system implementer
 - Clear **Service Level Agreements (SLA's)**, including performance indicators and penalties for non-compliance.
 - A robust **evaluation framework** to guide selection of the most qualified bidder
 - Legal and compliance clauses to ensure adherence to procurement laws, intellectual property rights, cybersecurity, and data protection regulations

📄 Access the EOI Document and further details

Interested and qualified parties with demonstrated experience are encouraged to visit the official project website www.onetrade.lk to download the EOI document and access further details regarding submission guidelines and deadlines.

As this This consultancy assignment is critical to laying the foundation for the successful implementation of the NSW system, we look forward to engaging with experienced professionals who can shape a modern, efficient, and inclusive trade facilitation platform for Sri Lanka.

B. M. Vajira Gunarathna
IT Specialist I - TNSWSP



Mr. H.C.D.L. Silva, Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, attended the event as the **Chief Guest** and also signed the MoUs on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, symbolizing the Ministry's leadership and commitment to this digital transformation effort.

In addition to the signatories, **Additional Secretaries** from the relevant line ministries of the 18 Government Agencies were also present, acting as **Ministerial Coordinators** to facilitate continued coordination throughout the project's implementation.





Adding to the significance of the day, the **official website of the Trade National Single Window System Project** was ceremonially launched by Mr. Silva prior to the MoU signing. The website will serve as a central information platform for stakeholders, providing updates, resources, and progress on the project.

This multi-agency initiative is expected to drastically improve trade efficiency, transparency, and accountability by reducing delays and enabling electronic submission, processing, and clearance of trade-related documents across all regulatory bodies involved.



The Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) Project is a flagship initiative of the Government of Sri Lanka, operating under the Trade and Investment Policy Department of the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development. Its goal is to enhance trade facilitation by creating a centralized digital platform for international trade, allowing businesses to submit standardized information and documents through a single-entry point. This system will streamline processes, reduce redundancy, and improve efficiency by connecting multiple Government Agencies (GAs) responsible for issuing Certificates, Licenses, Permits, and Recommendations (CLPR) for imports, exports, and transshipments.

"Photographs courtesy of the Media Unit of the Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development"

SELECTION OF NSW DEVELOPMENT PATH FOR SRI LANKA; - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS TO INVOLVE IN THE PROJECT DECISION MAKING PROCESS



Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the National Single Window System (NSWS) project is in full swing with the blessings of the Trade and Investment Policy Department (TIPD) as the Implementing Agency and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as the Executing Agency. After successful completion of the preliminary stage of the project, now their step into Phase I of the Project Implementation stage.

With request of the Government of Sri Lanka, Asian Development Bank provided Technical Assistance for “appraising and recommendation of suitable NSW development path for Sri Lanka”. The main purpose of this assignment was to compare the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), ASYCUDA NSW system with commercial off-the shelf products (COTS). The findings of the assignment were presented to all stakeholders of the project including 18 participating Government Agencies (GAs) and private sector.



Similarly, with the invitation extended by the Treasury, the UNCTAD, ASYCUDA NSW development officials visited Sri Lanka and made a presentation to the private sector on 06th August 2025 at the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC). It was an opportunity for the private sector to understand its implementation mechanism, technical details, other features of their product, time taken for development and to clarify certain ambiguities as the beneficiaries of the project.



The event was organized by the TIPD and PIU with the support of CCC. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Harshana Suriyapperuma, Secretary to the Treasury with the participation of Mr. Pradeep Kumara, Director General, TIPD, officials of the PIU, CCC officials and private sector stakeholders. Once again, the TIPD and PIU emphasized their participatory approach in the project decision making process.

Neelakanth Wanninayake
Project Director - TNSWSP

How the National Single Window is Transforming Cross-Border Commerce in Future

The future introduction and evolution of National Single Window (NSW) systems will be a critical driver of global trade efficiency, security, and sustainability. Here's what to expect in future main elements.

Global Expansion & Integration

- **New Implementations:** More developing nations will adopt NSWs (supported by WTO, WCO, UNESCAP).
- **Cross-Border Interoperability:** Linking national NSWs for seamless regional trade.
- **UN/CEFACT Standards:** Wider adoption of global data models and APIs for compatibility.



Advanced Technology Integration

- **AI/ML:** Predictive analytics for risk management, automated document checks, and process optimization.
- **Blockchain:** Secure, transparent sharing of trade documents (e.g., Bills of Lading, Certificates) with immutable audit trails.
- **IoT:** Real-time tracking of shipments integrated with customs clearance processes.



Expanded Scope & Services

- **Beyond Borders:** Integration with domestic logistics, port/airport systems, and e-commerce platforms.
- **New Regulators:** Inclusion of agencies handling **environmental/sustainability data** (carbon footprint tracking), health, and agricultural controls.
- **"Single Window for Citizens":** Unified platforms for business registration, licenses, tax filing, and trade permits.

Challenges to Address

- ✓ **Data Privacy/Security:** Safeguarding sensitive commercial and personal data.
- ✓ **Legacy System Integration:** Connecting outdated government IT systems.
- ✓ **Digital Divide:** Ensuring SMEs and smaller traders can access/use NSWs affordably.
- ✓ **Legal Harmonization:** Aligning laws across agencies/countries for mutual recognition.

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