

Technical support for the preparation of the National Customs Single Window in Cyprus

Final Report

Technical Support Instrument

Supporting reforms in 27 Member States



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1. Purpose and structure of the report

The purpose of this report is to finalise the project, by presenting the lessons learned from the project implementation, together with a list of actions/recommendations to follow-up the mid- and long-term impact of the project.

The analysis will be conducted per deliverable. Each one of them will present the tasks carried out and the corresponding outcomes, as well as the specific challenges faced for their productions and the actions taken to mitigate these challenges (if any).



2. Deliverable submission analysis

2.1. DELIVERABLE 1. INCEPTION REPORT

TASKS/ACTIVITIES	Date of implementation	
Task 1.1. Organise the kick off meeting	October 2021-January 2022	
Task 1.2. Carry out initial fact finding meetings		
Task 1.3. Produce inception report		
Deliverable	Submission first version	Final approval
Deliverable 1. Inception Report	November 2021	January 2022

Deliverable 1 in a nutshell

- The kick off meeting took place on October 20, 2021 in Cyprus
- Project management and governance measures were agreed.
- Some prior interviews were conducted on site (visits to port and airport with the beneficiary).
- The first draft of the Inception Report was submitted in November 2021 and was officially approved by the beneficiary with minor amendments.
- Complementary interviews were conducted online by NTT DATA team on the 7th and 8th of December 2021 with the relevant stakeholders (ministries and agencies).

Main challenges faced and solutions provided during this period

N/A

2.2. DELIVERABLE 2. TECHNICAL ANALYTICAL REPORT ON THE CAPACITY OF CYPRUS TO DEVELOP ITS NCSW

TASKS/ACTIVITIES	Date of implementation
Task 2.1. Analyse the current (as-is) situation	October 2021 – March 2022
Task 2.2. Provide an expert analysis on the business needs	
Task 2.3. Collect and analyse the best practices	
Task 2.4. Design the desired future (to-be) situation	
Task 2.5. Gap analysis and transition plan	
Task 2.6. Business case	



Deliverable	Submission first version	Final approval
Deliverable 2. Technical analytical report on the capacity of Cyprus to develop its NCSW	February 2022	March 2022

Deliverable 2 in a nutshell

- A small extension of deadline (2 weeks) was requested and approved for the submission of Deliverable 2.
- During the last week of March, a meeting took place to define the next steps. The beneficiary answered some relevant questions for the advancement of the project.

Main challenges faced and solution provided during this period:

- The beneficiary sometimes took a bit longer than expected to provide feedback as many stakeholders need to be consulted.

2.3. DELIVERABLE 3. EXPERT REPORT ON BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

TASKS/ACTIVITIES	Date of implementation	
Task 3.1. Analysis of the business requirements for the design of NCSW	March – June 2022	
Task 3.2. Design the model and processes of the NCSW		
Task 3.3. Define and elaborate a high level architecture for the NCSW		
Task 3.4. Recommendations for functional, non functional and technical requirements		
Deliverable	Submission first version	Final approval
Deliverable 3. Technical analytical report on the capacity of Cyprus to develop its NCSW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-deliverable 3.1: Analysis of business requirements for NCSW • Sub-deliverable 3.2: Design of the models and processes in the NCSW • Sub-deliverable 3.3: Definition and elaboration of a high-level architecture for the NCSW • Sub-deliverable 3.4: Recommendations for functional, non-functional and technical requirements 	May 2022	June 2022

Deliverable 3 in a nutshell



- In order to speed up the review and feedback process, NTT DATA team proposed and the beneficiary accepted, a slide bullet point approach structure for the discussion of Deliverable 3.
- The experts worked on Deliverable 3 after receiving some relevant clarifications from the Cyprus Customs Authority.

Main challenges faced and solution provided during this period:

N/A

2.4. DELIVERABLE 4. AN ACTION PLAN, A ROADMAP, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

TASKS/ACTIVITIES	Implementation date	
Task 4.1. An action plan	June – July 2022	
Task 4.2. A Roadmap		
Task 4.3. An implementation plan		
Deliverable	Submission first version	Final approval
Deliverable 4. Action plan, roadmap and implementation	July 2022	July 2022

Deliverable 4 in a nutshell

- The period of implementation for preparing the Deliverable 4 was short and straight forward.
- The first version of Deliverable 4 was quickly officially approved.

Main challenges faced and solution provided during this period:

N/A

2.5. DELIVERABLE 5. TRAINING MATERIALS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

TASKS/ACTIVITIES	INITIAL DATE FOR DELIVERY	UPDATED DATE FOR DELIVERY
Training materials and training sessions	July – September 2022	
Deliverable	Submission first version	Final approval
Deliverable 5. Training materials and training sessions	August 2022	September 2022



Deliverable 5 in a nutshell

- The proposal of methodology and content for the final deliverable (training) was approved in the beginning of August 2022.
- Considering that the training was planned to be offered in August (as DG Reform initially refused a contract extension), the team and the beneficiary discussed the best format to deliver (online or in person).
- An update meeting with DG Reform took place to discuss the best way to finalise the project.
- A contract extension of two months was finally approved.
- Two training sessions were organised online on the 12th and 13rd of September.

Main challenges faced and solution provided during this period:

- A request for a small extension (1 or 2 months) was initially refused by DG Reform.
- The project officer from DG Reform was replaced at the very end of the project causing some delays for the approval of some deliverables by the Commission.
- The request for contract extension was finally adopted enabling a proper conclusion of the project.



3. Lessons learned

The team had luckily very few challenges to face during the project implementation, thanks to the proactive engagement of both the Cyprus Customs and DG Reform. The following lessons learned, and conclusions can be highlighted:

- Considering the relative short duration of the project, compared to the number of deliverables to submit, it is essential to take quick mitigation measures when challenges jeopardizing the project are identified.
- To avoid the production of too many versions of a same deliverable causing a delay to the overall project schedule, the following actions are to be implemented:
 - The persons in charge of providing feedback to the deliverables to be clearly defined from the very beginning of the project. One focal point to be responsible for harmonizing the feedback to prevent misunderstandings, repetitions and contradictions.
 - The structure and a detailed table of contents to be approved by the beneficiary before submitting any first version of a deliverable.
 - The feedback provided to the reports to be, as much as possible, provided within the deadlines contractually agreed in line with the agreements reached in the previous phase.
- It is key to have a written record per email of the official approval of a deliverable (first by the beneficiary and then by DG Reform).



4. Final recommendations for the project follow up

In order to move the NCSW along its intended path there is a number of **recommended activities and actions** proposed in **Deliverables 2, 3 & 4**, which will need to be undertaken and accomplished for the successful implementation and sustainable operation of the project. These activities and actions include **proposals relating to the existing legal and regulatory framework, changes to operational procedures, adaptations and upgrades to the IT technical and functional architecture and the re-engineering of certain business processes** to replace manual and paper based procedures with automated ones. In addition, recommendations regarding the timeframe for implementation as reflected in the **Action Plan and the Roadmap Implementation Plan** provide valuable **guidance** for the coming years.

Whilst these recommendations are crucial to the development and implementation of the NCSW, the **introduction of automated processes** will undoubtedly have a **dramatic impact on the day-to-day working activities of the personnel of the various border authorities** who will operate and interact with it. Therefore it is of equal importance to emphasise and underline the high value to be attributed on change **management, capacity building and training** which should go hand in hand with the technical developments.

In this regard personnel at all levels within the border authorities (Managers, policy makers, front-line staff) as well as operational staff from the private sector should be given **sufficient knowledge and training** in order to effectively operate the new systems.

Deliverable 5 was the first step in this process providing personnel with some general **background information about the NCSW** as well as more **technical details**, however in the future it is recommended to introduce more **specialized training** that could consist of;

- **IT systems:** Computer /IT-related skills of a higher level for the technical staff charged with operating and maintaining the NCSW hardware and software.
- **Risk management:** Customs processing already deploys a basic risk management regime in the form of green yellow and red channels, other BRA personnel would benefit from training on the principles of modern compliance risk management to incorporate the development of entity-based risk scores; whole-of-customer profiles; the use of engagement and education as tools to achieve compliance etc.)



- **Outcomes-driven performance management:** Border Authorities and their personnel will need to be trained to design key performance indicators (KPIs) and to monitor their effectiveness.
- **Call centre:** An essential feature of the NCSW design will be the set up of call centres and help desks. Specialised training courses will extend beyond just relevant domain information and troubleshooting knowledge to also equip staff with the required communication skills in various languages.



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