SUCCESS STORY
ASEAN Single Window Closer to Goal

New software builds momentum for simple exchange of information so goods can clear borders quickly

The ASEAN Single Window is expected to reduce the amount of time it takes to clear containers through customs from days to minutes.

USAID is helping to develop software that will allow ASEAN's member states process shipping information for speedy customs clearance.

The vision for the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) is simple: Improve the handling of goods at borders so containers clear customs in 30 minutes instead of five days. Consumers benefit from the secure, timely delivery of goods at lower costs.

A major step in achieving this vision is to establish national single windows (NSW) among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' 10 member states. Each NSW will enable one-time, one-point submission of trade transaction information for processing by government agencies as well as customs authorities in each member state. The ASW will connect the national windows enabling region-wide sharing of trade transaction information.

Software demonstrating the effectiveness of the ASW was demonstrated at an ASW Steering Committee meeting in November 2008.

The application was developed by the ASEAN Single Window Project, funded under the ADVANCE program by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The new software enables the electronic exchange of information for certificates of origin, the documents required for goods to receive ASEAN's preferential tariff treatment.

Members of the ASW Steering Committee and technical experts were impressed by the demonstration. They recognized the software's value in encouraging member states to develop their NSWs and put it on the agenda for the next meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers in 2009.

Brunei and Laos have expressed interest in using the software. Singapore and Thailand, which currently have similar systems operating, are considering merging the pilot software with their own systems to improve cross-border information exchange.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states are Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.