

PORTNET, your International operations at full throttle

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Editorial

The National Single Window for Foreign Trade Procedures, “PortNet”, is a community platform for exchanging computerized data. It aims to digitalize foreign trade formalities. The Single Window implementation is a national project which is at the centre of several public and private entities' strategy. Pioneer in Africa, the project constitutes a model of full integration of the foreign trade chain, with an undeniable beneficial impact that has been noticed since the launch of the said platform.

This project, brought up at the Moroccan government summit, shows a real awareness of the need of the public and private sectors to broker synergies and build partnerships to simplify, optimize, improve business climate and make it transparent.

Thanks to its innovative and evolving architecture and its local support, PortNet is currently the National Single Window that manages foreign trade formalities in all its facets (maritime, port, land, air, logistical and commercial). Hence, it is an unprecedented model of supply chain full integration.

This guide, the fruit of the collaboration between CGEM's Business Climate Commission and PortNet PLC, was drafted to inform companies and different economic operators about the concept of the Single Window of Foreign Trade Procedures and to explain to them the advantages of implementing a unified access window for the set of services linked to the international trade ecosystem.

This guide details the bases of PortNet implementation and the services it offers. It also gives a projection on its evolution and its perspectives. It is intended as an awareness-raising tool for companies striving for the competitive advantages it provides in terms of visibility and integration in making international trade operations.



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1. Context

Over the past decades, customs administrations established automated systems to improve trade facilitation, effectively achieve their objectives in terms of revenue collection, social protection, and provide operational information to governments.

Thanks to the advances reached in the field of information technology, governments were able to considerably improve their services. Each development contributed with new offerings due to which the regulatory framework of the world trade could be transformed. These advances have not only affected new technologies, as we can also find them at the level of new operational philosophies and architectures, which have led to reinforce trade operators' organization and effectiveness. The "Single Window" concept is one of these advances.

"Single Window" is a governance philosophy that drives the evolution of traditional governmental structures towards new agreements that respond more to the needs of citizens and companies. In the "Single Window" approach, governmental services will be provided to citizens and trade operators through a single interface to the administration. The complex organizational modalities, on which the provision of services depends, will be transparent to the users of these services. This will increase effectiveness through reducing costs related to transactions regulations.

The National Ports Agency launched PortNet Project in 2008 in a context of international trade competition and a sustained growth of Moroccan port traffic, especially container traffic.

The implementation of PortNet is the result of years of tireless ongoing community work. This community unanimously places the company and the national economy in the center of its interests. Accordingly, PortNet Single Window aims to harmonize all B2B and B2G foreign trade processes operated through the cross-border trade points with the support of public and private service providers.

PortNet is at the crossroad of several strategies of governmental entities. Thus, this Single Window is at the core of the national development strategy, placing the national economic operator at the center of this latter.

2. What is portnet?

PortNet, the National Single Window for Foreign Trade Procedures, is a computer tool which enables the e-processing of authorizations, permits,

certificates, customs documents and other deliveries by the competent organizations of the State, to undertake specific import and export operations. The safe developed system guarantees the technological and legal security of different documents upon the integration of a digital signature and e-payment.

Therefore, PortNet allows economic operators, through a progressive integration of their supply chains and those of public and private service providers, to have a better control on complex import and export trade.

3. Portnet, a paradigm shift

PortNet design is based on a new paradigm, which is putting the company first. The single Window analyses official controls from the point of view of an economic operator and considers all potential interactions between commercial operators and regulatory bodies, through reducing departments within the administration. Such an approach undeniably shed light on all redundancies in procedures, the duplication of formalities and the lack of profitability when completing paperwork related to cross-border regulation in general. This analytic approach identifies a series of solutions to considerably simplify the interface between the administration and the commercial operators, while giving a new orientation to the procedures and reorganizing the necessary regulation documents.

4. Why portnet is indispensable ?

Traditionally, several bodies participate in foreign trade operations. Each body was responsible for regulation and control pursuant to a various set of legislative texts, independently performed its functions and defended its own interests, without taking into account the role of other concerned entities.

There was no common objective that would have allowed the monitoring entities to work cohesively. Therefore, no interaction or unification of concepts took place. In addition, importers had to move and request customs documents in each concerned agency.

The decision to create PortNet was taken to put an end to the previous system, in which several intervening entities in foreign trade disorderly conduct proceedings - with no boundaries or focal point - and follow uncoordinated operating modes. Consequently, some requirements were redundant due to the lack of interactivity management of data and languages coding, and they were only identifiable in one given

body. This resulted in a down-time in the making of proceedings and undermined public sector's transparency and efficiency.

The chain of public proceedings related to foreign trade activity involves several public entities as well as private agencies (banks, forwarding agencies...), and constitutes at least 30% of trade formalities. These operations costs issuing from foreign trade activities increase the companies' overhead costs, which, at the end, result in impacting investments and raising the price of goods and services.

We aimed to develop a process that will enable importers to carry out proceedings from their headquarters, without having to travel to financial institutions or state entities. To achieve this, an integrated, easy-to-use, extremely secure model that can be made via internet had to be created.

5. Portnet strengths and advantages

The development of a National Single Window for Foreign Trade Procedures is a vital tool to improve effectiveness of foreign trade logistics chain, quality of service, and reduce the waiting time and storage period of export as well as import goods. It is also an efficient tool to overcome problems and uncertainty in this field.

PortNet strengthens the competitiveness of the foreign trade chain through:

- Increasing the efficiency of the logistics chains of economic operators and public and private service providers.
 - Speeding up cross-border movement of exported and imported goods
 - Providing an environment favorable to the competitiveness of economic operators with the possibility to deliver just in time .
 - Reducing uncertainty regarding timeframes and logistic costs.
 - Improving business climate, good governance and increasing transparency in company-administration relationships.
 - Simplifying and speeding up procedures and formalities of the entry and withdrawal of goods.
 - Improving the traceability of operations at any time, anticipation and planning capacities due to the quality and good flow of information.
- In short, PortNet synchronizes procedures for greater trade efficiency.

Regarding users, the following advantages were identified :

- Reducing physical movement costs to conduct proceedings.
- Reducing mailing fees.
- Reducing fees related to documents.
- Reducing proceedings costs.
- Ensuring the security of made operations.

- ### Advantages for administrative entities:

- ## 6. Portnet community



The PortNet platform called an important community of public and private entities to integrate and synchronize their proceedings, while respecting regulations in force. This community is divided into:

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Stakeholders: Banks, shipping agents, handling operators, offices, administrations and ministries;

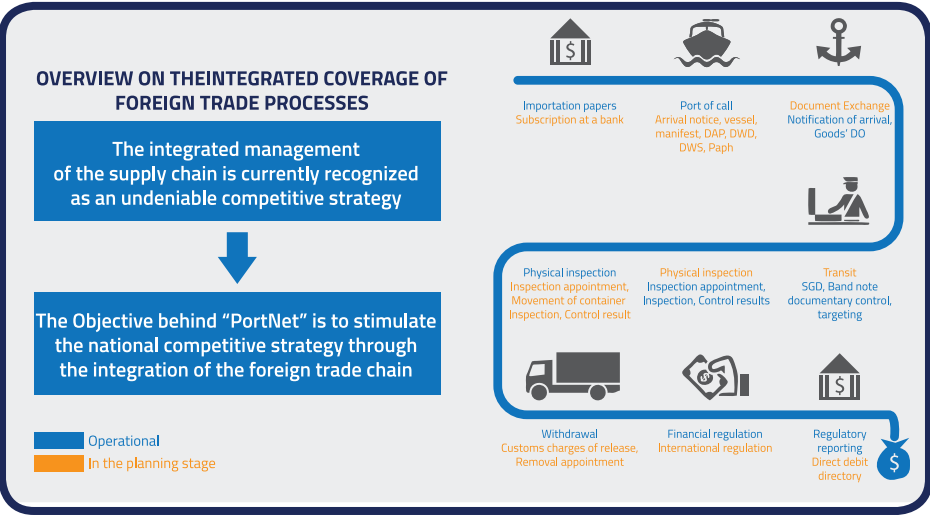
Control entities: Administrations (MIC, ONSSA), offices, customs and ministries.

Partners: Confederations, unions, national and international professional associations.

7. Services provided by single window “portnet”

A traditional foreign trade operation involves the intervention of several entities. Each body separately carries out more than 4 different operations and produces documents to be transmitted to another stakeholder in the chain, while the economic operator must deal with each of these players.

Thus, PortNet offers the economic operator the possibility to submit in one place and at once all required information and documents related to importing, exporting or transit formalities to all public or private partners.



Summary diagram of the integrated coverage of foreign trade processes

Operators benefit from a faster withdrawal and clearance of goods, enabling them to speed up the supply chain. Furthermore, improving transparency and increasing the predictability can further reduce potential fraud, both in the public and private sectors.

To date and in order to cover in an integrated way all foreign trade processes, the PortNet platform proposes a range of services and packages accessible to users and partners of the Single Window for Foreign Trade Procedures in line with the legislation.

Among the services provided by PortNet:

The digitalization of procedures:

The ultimate goal of PortNet is to digitalize all foreign trade procedures, through the simplification and progressive migration of all manual procedures to e-processing, by means of information and communication technologies. This is in view to further reduce costs and transactions timeframes, ensure revenue security collect and contribute to business climate improvement.

To achieve this goal of eliminating papers and physical movement of companies, a set of measures and information systems were developed and established in coordination with all PortNet Community to ensure the security of legal documents and transactions.

This digitalization of procedures will guarantee integrity in business climate through reducing physical contact with administrative agents and putting an end to selective treatments.

Simplifying import and export operations:

• Digitalization of importation papers:

A ministerial decision enabled the effective entry into force of a digitalized system for the subscription of importation papers since 26 September 2014, and its generalization in June 2015;

Hence, PortNet exclusively offers the following operations:

- Subscription, pre- direct debit and direct debit of importation papers.
- Financial regulation, customs charges, and clearance of importation papers.
- Change of the bank counter of importation papers.
- Real time tracking of regulations and status of import and export papers before different stakeholders: Ministry in charge of Foreign Trade, Moroccan banks, Customs Administration and Indirect Taxes, and the Exchange Office.

Simplifying the importation process allows, after the 2015 generalization, for the digitalized system to considerably ease the procedure related to importation papers by eliminating the submission of papers and physical movement throughout this process.

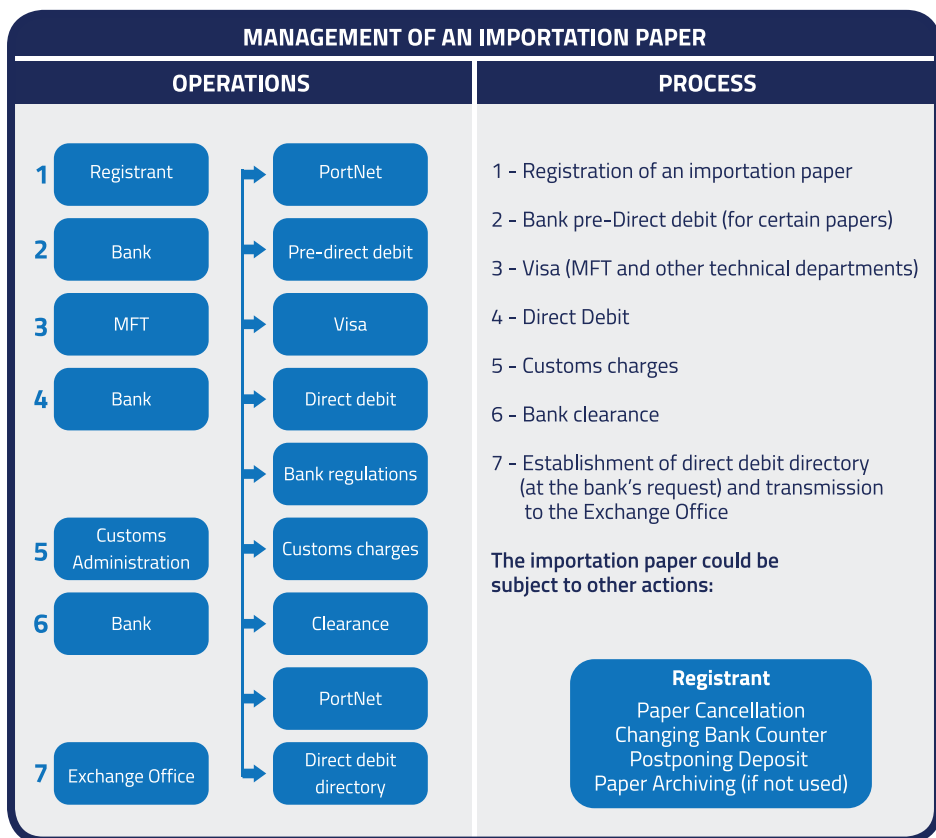
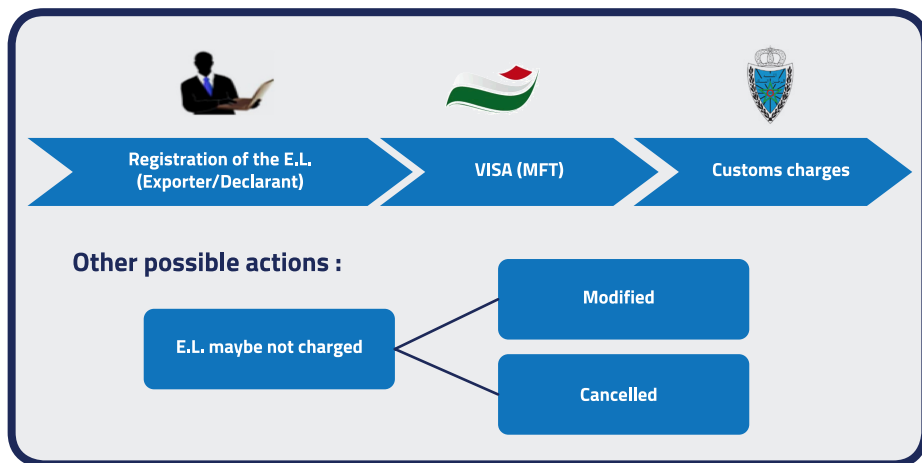


Figure: Descriptive diagram of the registration process of an importation paper

• **Digitalization of the export license :**

- The export license is a document by which the exporter agrees to comply with the provisions of the exchange regulations and the repatriation of export proceeds. It applies only to goods subject to approval of the Ministry of Foreign Trade.
- The processing of an export license involves carrying out a set of tasks:
- Registration of the export license
- Visa of the export license;
- Customs charges;
- If the license is not charged, it could be subject to:
- Cancellation.
- The procedure is initiated by creating the export license on PortNet by the exporter or their registrant, and it ends with the clearance of exports

by the Exchange Office after the exporter sends remittance vouchers.



Tracking the delivery of the goods in real time with an instant alert system:

Through their connection to PortNet and access to various menus, the users can track in real time the different stages the goods go through:

- Online Tracking and tracing of the location and status of the goods while ensuring data confidentiality
- Checking the Arrival Notice of the goods
- Checking provisions of port of calls at all Moroccan ports
- Checking shipping movements
- Tracking history of the goods

Facilitation of customs clearance and removal operations

Through the automatic interface of PortNet, along with the customs information system and other partners, the user can:

- Electronically collect physical documents of pre-clearance, clearance, and removal of the goods;
- Direct access to check and edit: Single Goods Declaration (SGD), delivery orders, and release orders.

Facilitation of procedures of goods control:

- Automatic transmission of the documents required by bodies involved in the control of goods;
- Real-time access to the inspection schedule of the goods by the relevant control bodies and the customs.
- Remote tracking of the process of customs and non-customs control.

The PortNet platform enables coordinated management of physical inspection of goods by customs and other non-customs control agencies (MIC and ONSSA).

Indeed, the platform manages the inspection agenda by transmitting the date of control suggested by customs to other bodies, which validate it before returning it to the customs to fix an appointment for inspection. An Instant notification is sent by the platform to the handling operator to move the container subject of inspection to the inspection area.

The platform also carries out the automatic transmission of the documents required by bodies involved in the control of the goods.

Via PortNet, the importer can also track, in real time, the process of customs and non-customs control.

The coordination of the control process carried out by PortNet allows:

- Anticipation and traceability in planning the process of physical control of goods;
- Better management of capacity of areas dedicated to the physical inspection of containers;
- Handling deadlines related to the control process (J+2 or later);
- Reduction of the goods' period of storage at the port.

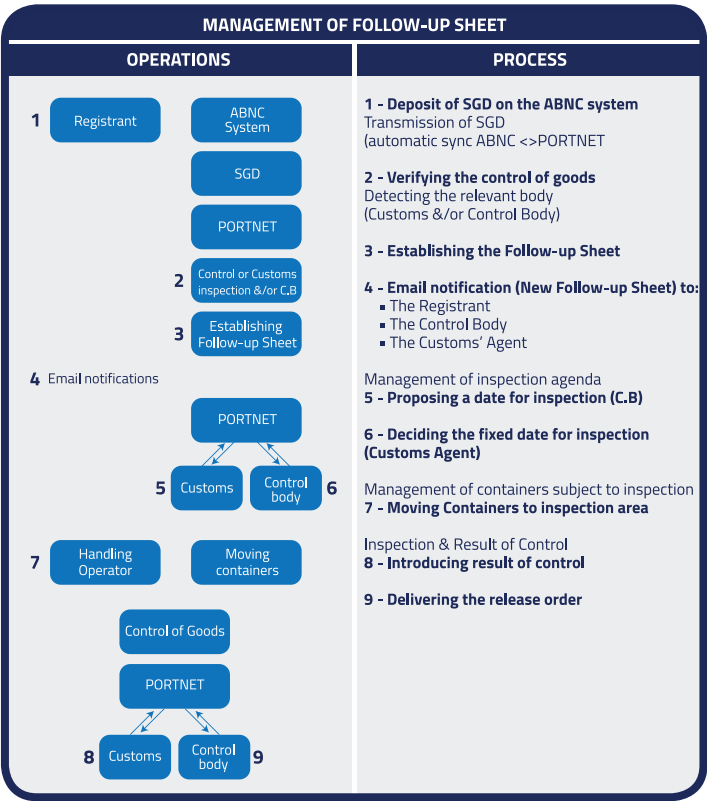


Figure: Descriptive diagram of the process of goods control

Real time support and assistance for users:

PortNet is committed to providing its users with a high level service. The Single Window is able to offer a 24/7 service. PortNet services are constantly evolving and improving through an ongoing exchange of views with users and actors in the foreign trade community and an excellent understanding of the environment of each of them.

Complaints management: PortNet has set up and provides an online complaints service for its users. This system handles all types of complaints for all partners and sends the complaint to the focal point of the administration or the relevant partner for immediate support and response as soon as possible. It also provides better visibility and a strict monitoring of the progress of treatment of different requests for assistance of complaints. This tool is accessible via the following address: <http://reclamation.portnet.ma>

Training: With programs that are specifically tailored for each public or private stakeholder in the foreign trade community, PortNet provides training programs to ensure a better understanding and the success of the single window in the foreign trade community as a whole. PortNet can also rely on the training expertise of its several partners including the Port Training Institute.

Access to directories of ship-owners, shipping agents, forwarding agents authorized by customs, repository of ships, classification of dangerous goods, locations, prediction of ports of call...

Access to short-term and sector-related statistics

Access to import and export procedures

You can find the detailed user guides with features and services available on PortNet in a downloadable version at www.portnet.ma Support Section.

8. Progress and prospects

Since its creation, PortNet PLC, in collaboration with all foreign trade actors, intended to act on the levers of improving competitiveness of **Moroccan economic operators. The main missions of PortNet revolve around:**

- Increasing the efficiency of the logistics chains of economic operators and public and private service providers.
- Speeding up cross-border movement of exported and imported goods
- Providing an environment favorable to the competitiveness of economic operators with the possibility to deliver just in time .

- Reducing uncertainty regarding timeframes and logistic costs.
- Improving business climate, good governance and increasing transparency in company-administration relationships.
- Simplifying and speeding up procedures and formalities of the entry and withdrawal of goods via their digitalization.
- Improving the traceability of operations at any time, anticipation and planning capacities due to the quality and good flow of information.

This approach has achieved a significant number of accomplishments and results, whose main indicators are:

- More than 19 200 integrated importers.
- More than **24 000** integrated **users**.
- More than 133 interconnected marine and shipping **agents**.
- More than 20 interconnected key public and private **bodies**.
- More than **760** integrated **forwarding agents** authorized by customs.
- More than **315 681** monthly exchanged messages in 2015.
- **15** connected **banks** in Morocco.
- More than **900** monthly registered **stop-overs**.
- Operational in over **9** commercial **ports** in Morocco.
- Average period of storage in Casablanca port is **5.72 days**.

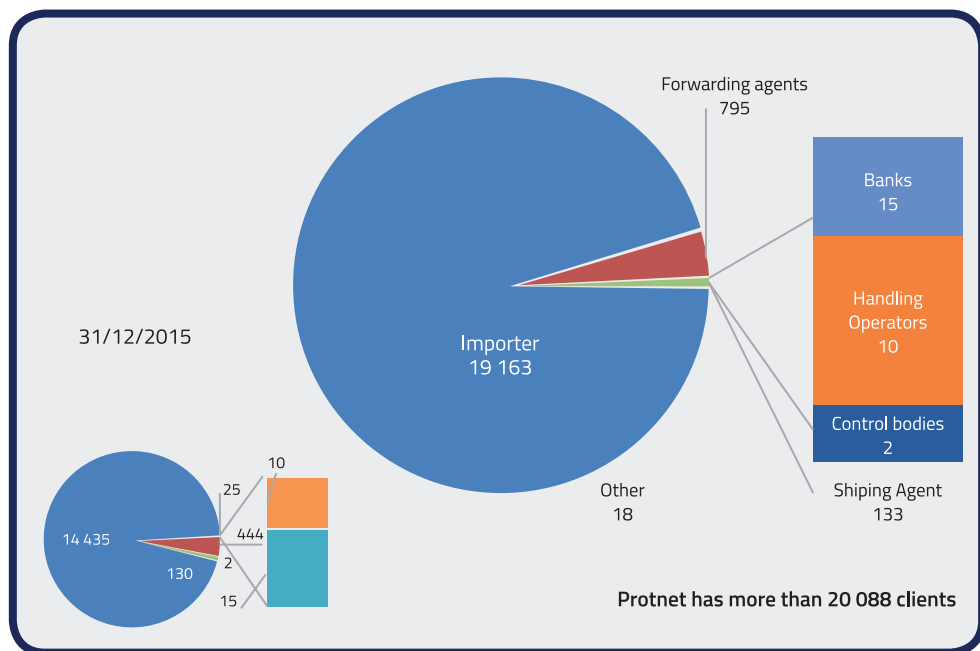
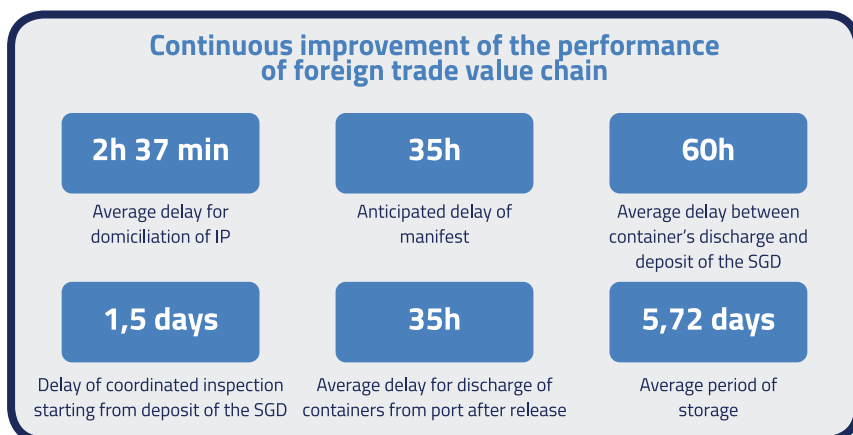


Figure: Number of PortNet subscribers (July 2016)



Also in order to simplify and integrate all procedures relating to foreign trade, the main prospects for PortNet in the long term are:

- Eliminating paper documents and the achievement of the Paperless objective
- Reducing human contact through the digitalization of all foreign trade procedures
- Traceability of all operations in real time
- Securing information and improving revenue
- Improving the business climate
- More than 10 000 connected economic operators
- More than 50 integrated SCA operators
- Generalization of airport traffic in 5 main airports in Morocco
- Generalization of land traffic
- Expansion of PortNet to cover all foreign trade operations.

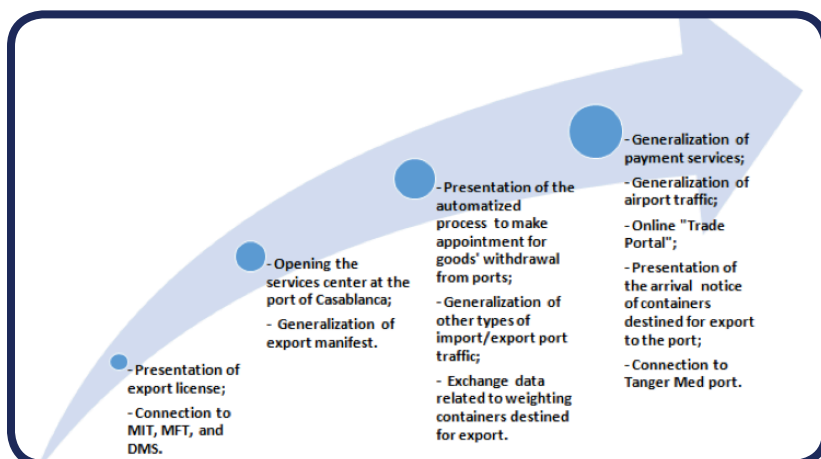


Figure: Projects in progress and next steps

9. Access to the PortNet Single Window

- Access to the PortNet platform: www.portnet.ma
- PortNet web portal : www.portnet.ma/portail
- Link to download the procedure to access and subscribe to PortNet services: www.portnet.ma/portail Support Section
- Link to download user guides: www.portnet.ma/portail Support Section
- Contact information for User Assistance Services Helpdesk:
Complaint platform: <http://reclamation.portnet.ma>
Phone : 0522 44 89 18 / 05 22 30 86 45
- Green number of Ministry in charge of Foreign Trade: 08 0000 4041
- PORTNET S.A : Enceinte du Port de Casablanca, Bâtiment de la capitainerie, 2ème étage – Port de Casablanca MAROC
Email : contact@portnet.ma

10. Glossary

Single Window : the Single Window is designed to expedite and simplify information flows between traders and public authorities and making significant benefits to all stakeholders involved in cross-border trade. On the theoretical level, the single window can be defined as «a system that allows traders to provide information to a single body to fulfill all regulatory requirements related to import or export operations».

In practical terms, a 'Single window' space is characterized by a unique 'entry point', either physical or electronic, for the submission and processing of all data and all documents necessary for the release and clearance of goods in an international transaction. This 'entry point' is managed by a relevant body and /or initiates combined controls.

Digitalization of procedures: Digitalization is the replacement of physical data carriers (often paper) with computer files, until reaching a «paperless office» or «Zero Paper» when the substitution is complete.

The main objective of digitalization is to simplify foreign trade procedures through replacing manual processes with e-processing, through the use of information and communications technology. This is to reduce costs and time of transactions, secure income and contribute to the improvement of the business climate.

EDI : Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is a technique that replaces the physical exchange of documents between companies (orders, invoices, delivery notes...) through exchanges, according to a standardized format, between computers connected by specialized connections, or by a (private) value-added network (VAN). The data are structured according to an international technical standards reference (e.g.

EDIFACT). For example, faxing an order and its entry by an operator of the business provider are replaced by transmitting information that is routed to a computer capable of interpreting the order in the supplying company.

Economic operators : The terms «entrepreneur», «supplier», and «service provider» indicate any natural or legal person, public entity, or group of such persons and/or bodies which offer, respectively, the execution of business and/or work, products, or services on the market. The term «economic agent» covers the concepts of entrepreneur, supplier and service provider.

Importation papers : Importation papers may consist of an import commitment, an import license, or a preliminary import declaration.

- The importation commitment is a registered document to import freely importable goods. Its validity is six months from the date of direct debit.
- The importation license is the registered paper for the import of goods subject to restriction measures under the laws and regulations governing foreign trade. Its validity is six months from the date it is issued by the Ministry for Foreign Trade.

SGD : The detailed declaration is the legal deed by which a natural or legal person can:

- Express their willingness to assign the goods they import a definitive customs procedure (release for consumption, economic systems, etc.);
- Commit, under the legal penalties, to comply with the obligations under the customs procedure (payment of duties and taxes, export after processing, etc.).
- Provide all documents necessary for the identification of the goods and the application of customs procedures or others for which the Directorate is responsible. Along with the detailed declaration, these documents form an indivisible document.

All imported goods must be subject to a detailed declaration on a form called «Single Goods Declaration" (S.G.D.). The exemption of duties and taxes does not spare one from this mandatory declaration.

Direct debit : an operation consisting of ensuring the payment of a bill via a bank which charges the account of the debtor for the amounts appearing in the bill. This means to designate a bank which has to make the payment of an importation paper.



INCLUSION



COMPETITIVENESS



GROWTH





PORTNET

الشبكة الوطنية الوحيد لتبسيط مساطر التجارة الخارجية
Guichet Unique National des Procédures du Commerce Extérieur

Our Goals

- Simplification of procedures
- Anticipation of information and action
- Improvement of competitiveness among national companies
- Partners networking
- Compliance with international standards
- Supply chain integration

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