

UN/CEFACT, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, has made available a new edition (2020) of the [Recommendation No 33 \(Recommendation and Guidelines on Establishing a Single Window\)](#) that updates the previous version released in [2005](#)

. According to Recommendation No 33, a Single Window is a facility (in most cases an electronic platform) that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfill all import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements. Its main aim is to simplify regulatory formalities and reduce operating costs for traders, by avoiding them to submit redundant information and data to all the actors involved in cross-border operations. Essentially, instead of multiple documentary transmissions, traders can lodge to an electronic platform a single package of data containing all the information regarding their customs transactions, so that such data will be automatically distributed by the platform to all such actors, both for regulatory purposes (e.g. Customs, and other government authorities or inspection agencies, chambers of commerce, etc.) and for commercial, logistics or financial reasons (e.g. banks, insurances, forwarding agents, customs brokers, independent inspection companies, etc.).

The principle behind the SW systems is the reusability of the same data to comply with multiple regulatory requirements of both private and public agencies that are active in the international trade sector, and that are interconnected to the electronic platform. This is because in many countries, companies involved in international trade must prepare and submit large volumes of information and documents to governmental authorities to comply with import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements. Often, this information and documentation must be submitted to several different agencies, each with their own specific (manual or automated) systems and paper forms. These extensive requirements, together with their associated compliance costs, can constitute a serious burden to both Governments and the business community and represents a barrier to the development of international trade. The Single Window is meant to reduce non-tariff trade barriers by expediting and simplifying information flows between the private sector and the public sector so that meaningful gains to all parties involved in cross-border trade are brought.