

A World Bank [report](#) jointly published with the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) offers a step-by-step guide to implementing a Port Community System (PCS) and explains its advantages for developing countries. There is often a confusion between Port Community Systems and Single Windows. While Single Windows are [de](#)

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as a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements, PCS are digital collaborative platforms that enable seamless exchange of information among a port's many stakeholders, including customs agencies, port management, shipping and logistics companies, and freight forwarders.

[Keceli et al.](#)

more specifically define PCSs as a "computer network which links up the port with all the companies that use it, including hauliers, rail companies, shipping lines, feeder ports, shippers and customs officers". In reality, such platforms are not necessarily designed only for ports, as they can be established for automating and streamlining information flows also at airports, dry ports, land border posts or railway terminals, as explained in our

[article](#)

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PCSs basically reduce the paperwork and administrative red tape often associated with port logistics, leading to quicker decisions and streamlined operations. Benefits include greater competitiveness, more resilient supply chains, lower costs, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The World Bank/IAPH report includes detailed case studies of PCSs around the world that show how such platform have improved port operations in different geographical contexts. The African ports that introduced PCSs include Djibouti (port of Djibouti), Morocco (Tangier Med, Casablanca), Mauritius (Port Louis), Democratic Republic of Congo (ports of Kinshasa, Boma, Goma, Kisangani and Matadi), and Togo (Port of Lomé), which are analysed in the report.

Particularly interesting is the case study of the Djibouti PCS, that compared to other African PCSs has a particularly broad scope, as it also includes Maritime Single Window (MSW) functionalities. To this purpose, the recently published World Customs Organization/IAPH [Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities](#)

clarify that MSW are a public-private data collaboration platform that allows the submission to a single entry-point of standardized and harmonized information regarding the arrival, stay and departure of ships in ports and harbours. However, despite such systems cover mainly maritime regulatory procedures, they can be extended to other administrative, nautical, and operational

procedures and other related information between private-sector and public authorities in the port related to the vessel clearance process and the Port Call process. To be noted that starting from 1st January 2024, the MSWs will be mandatory in ports around the world, following the recent

[FAL 46 amendments to the IMO FAL Convention](#)

, which oblige (among others), public authorities to establish, maintain and use single window systems for the electronic exchange of information required on arrival, stay and departure of ships in ports. Public authorities, according to the IMO FAL 46, are all those agencies or officials in a State responsible for the application and enforcement of the laws and regulations of that State which relate to any aspect of the Standards and Recommended Practices contained in the ANNEX to the Convention on facilitation of international maritime traffic, 1965, as amended.

The broad coverage of the [Djibouti Port Community System](#) (DPCS) is due to the fact that it covers the Port of Djibouti/Doraleh multi-purpose, the Société de Gestion du terminal à Conteneur de Doraleh (SGTD) - formerly Doraleh Container Terminal (DCT) - the Port of Tadjourah, and the Horizon terminal (liquid-bulk). Functionalities of the DPCS have also expanded over time. In 2019, export procedures were integrated in the platform in addition to import and transit procedures. The processes that have been automated are detailed in the report.

The governance structure of the system is also particularly agile. DPCS works directly with stakeholders to digitalise their services through the integration of the PCS with their IT systems. Lastly, the DPCS has developed key performance indicators (KPI) to evaluate and monitor its performance. Examples of such KPIs include the average response time of responses by public sector entities and harbour master services.