Microsoft ®

Aid for Trade Global Review:
Microsoft and the Trans-Kalahari Corridor Regional Single Window

1. Introduction

Microsoft has partnered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Customs Agencies of Botswana and Namibia to provide the technology for the Trans-Kalahari Corridor Regional Single Window (RSW). The RSW will automate customs connectivity, reduce trade costs, and increase compliance between the customs authorities of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa. By enabling faster and more secure trade, this initiative aims to facilitate economic growth and development in the region.

2. Brief Company Background

Established in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ: MSFT) is an American public multinational corporation headquartered in Redmond, Washington that develops, manufactures, licenses, and supports a wide range of products and services predominantly related to computing. Microsoft employees 90,000 people worldwide and totaled $62.5 billion in sales in 2010. Through its Global Citizenship Initiative, Microsoft mobilizes resources across the company and around the world to create opportunities in the communities where it does business and to fulfill its commitment to serving the public good through innovative technologies and partnerships. More information can be found here.

3. Motivation / Problem Identified / Issue Addressed / Focus

Prior to the creation of the Trans-Kalahari RSW, goods traded between Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa had to deal with an inefficient system where different customs processes existed in each country. However, the RSW provides a platform for creating a single entrance point for all data and documents necessary to import or export goods and will thereby create a more efficient and secure customs process. This platform will be built on cloud-based Microsoft technology, as Microsoft sees cloud computing as where the future of customs technology lies.

4. Description of Initiative

On May 11, 2011, the World Customs Organization held its annual IT Conference and Exhibition, featuring the theme of cloud computing – a technology expected to revolutionize trade and customs operations. At the conference, representatives from USAID and the government of Namibia unveiled plans to create the Trans-Kalahari Corridor RSW. A partnership between USAID, Microsoft, and the Customs Agencies of Namibia and Botswana, the RSW will be a cloud computing-based trade application

– built on Microsoft technology – that will link customs processes between the governments of Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa.

A single window provides a platform creating a single entrance point for all data and documents necessary to import or export goods – with the goal of creating a more efficient and secure customs process. The Trans-Kalahari Corridor RSW will automate customs connectivity, reduce trade costs, and increase compliance between the customs authorities of all three countries. By enabling faster and more secure trade, this initiative aims to facilitate economic growth and development in the region.

With the RSW, the three countries will be able to leverage their existing customs platforms, while making their data available in the cloud for the first time. The Regional Single Window also allows for the integration of additional border agencies, enabling future development of an Integrated Border Management solution in the future.

Cloud computing is where the future of customs technology lies because it transcends national boundaries, creates greater IT efficiencies and helps trade stakeholders such as importers, exporters, border agencies access distant markets. It offers scalability, flexibility and unprecedented interoperability which will help trade grow as never before. Microsoft is excited to work with USAID and its partners to develop the Trans-Kalahari Corridor RSW.

Countries around the world rely on international trade to foster economic growth, while simultaneously enacting an increasingly complex system of customs policies and security requirements. Microsoft, working with its ecosystem of partners, is committed to helping trade stakeholders navigate these challenges by applying the next generation of technology, especially cloud computing. By leveraging these advanced technologies, countries can realize the available benefits of enhanced and efficient customs and trade transactions.

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