# FACILITATING U.S.-ASEAN TRADE THROUGH THE ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF TRADE DOCUMENTS

Following discussions with the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), the ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade, and E-Commerce (IGNITE) program has an opportunity to further USAID support for the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) by facilitating the linking of the U.S. Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) system to the ASW. This link would permit the electronic exchange of trade documents and data, enabling the U.S. government to improve the access of U.S. firms to the $2.5 trillion ASEAN market while leveraging the U.S. investment in both ACE and the ASW.

The proposed, multi-year effort promotes free, fair, and open trade with countries in Southeast Asia, further integrating them into global markets and trade structures and advancing the U.S. Indo-Pacific Vision. Further, this effort will strengthen ASEAN as an organization while improving bilateral relations between the U.S. and the 10 ASEAN member states. While other countries, including Japan, Korea, and New Zealand, have expressed interest in exchanging data with ASEAN, the United States is currently viewed as the preferred partner for this activity and can leverage that preference for leadership in this area.

Beyond expanding trade, electronic exchange of documents can assist the Customs Border Patrol and other agencies in targeting and reducing illegal trade and support pre-arrival clearance, a key objective of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

## POTENITIAL DELIVERABLES

–An agreement between ASEAN and the U.S. to launch negotiations for the legal framework for exchanging trade documents between ACE and the ASW.

–U.S. commitment to support the development of an international gateway for the ASW that would permit the exchange of documents with the United States and other parties.

## TIME FRAME

–Develop an ASEAN-U.S. Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (by 2020).

- Customs Border Patrol attended the ASW Symposium in Bangkok on June 24, 2019, and the ASW Steering Committee Meeting in early September to obtain agreement from ASEAN to launch negotiations in late 2019.
- USAID will immediately begin work with its ASEAN counterparts to prepare for negotiations.

–Develop ASEAN's ASW International Gateway (by 2021).

–USAID continues to expand existing efforts to design and implement the ASW international gateway catalyzed by the August 2019 ASW Technical Working Group meeting.

## CONTACT

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