THE CHALLENGES OF ACHIEVING A SEAMLESS INTER–AGENCY CARGO CLEARANCE

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1. Introduction

The need to achieve a seamless cargo clearance is the very reason for the existence of specialized agencies within the transportation supply chain domain. All agencies are supposed to deploy their expertise along the chain so that cargo clearance will be facilitated. Unfortunately, the chain appear not to be linked hence agencies operate in a silo.

1.2 Achieving a seamless inter-agency cargo clearance is desirable and the sure way to competitive business. To deliver on this, the role of the agencies in question needs to be properly understood and clearly defined and streamlined. How do agencies relate with service users to ensure efficient end to end flow? What is the general idea of seamless cargo clearance? Who are the major agencies involved in cargo clearance and who are the service user users? Are there specific knowledge gap that can impede on the success of seamless cargo clearance and how can these be plugged? Are there policies or structural issues limiting inter-agency collaboration or operations?

1.3 To achieve seamless cargo clearance, the overall objective of the project must be set and clearly understood by all stakeholders. To this extent, ownership of the project should not reside within a particular agency but hosted (in this case) by the Federal Ministry of Transportation or appointed coordinator. Smart targets must be set and monitored so as to enable periodic adjustments.

1.4 Cargo Journey and stake holder mapping

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| **1.4.1 Cargo originates – shipper – Nigerian Shippers Council** |
| * + 1. **Cargo handling and forwarding – freight forwarder – CRFFN**
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| * + 1. **Cargo Clearance – Freight Forwarder (customs agent) – Nigeria Customs**
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| * + 1. **Terminal Services (including scanning) – Terminal operators – NPA**
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| * + 1. **Cargo Inspection and certification – SON, Quarantine, NAFDAC, NDLEA**
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| **1.4.6 International carriage – shipping companies – International Regulation**  |

**1.5 Other Stakeholder Mapping**

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| **1. Shipper** |
| **2. Transporter** |
| **3. Freight forwarder** |
| **4. Logistics Service Provider (warehousing, packaging etc)** |
| **5. Terminal operator** |
| 1. **Shipping company**
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| 1. **Financial services**
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| 1. **Insurance services**
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**1.6 The need for Inter-agency collaboration**

CRFFN

Nigerian Shippers Council

Nigerian Customs Service

NPA

SON, NAFDAC, NDLEA

QUARANTINE

Carriers

Given the complexity of clearing operations and the need to optimize its operations for the benefit of the economy, a collaborative platform is imperative. This collaboration will encourage system thinking and actions and develop professional capacity.

**2. The Challenges of Seamless Cargo Clearance**

Accordingly, we find the under-listed factors in the way of seamless cargo clearance

1. Lack of integrated platform where all agencies interact and have the same knowledge base.
2. Lack of comprehensive data on who is doing what.
3. Low human capacity Base.
4. Lack of strategic agenda in the business of Cargo clearance.
5. Poor appreciation of the role of freight forwarding in supply chain.
6. Poor infrastructure
7. Low funding
8. Need to build system Integrity
9. Poor research and communication.
10. Safety and security challenges

**3. Conclusion**

Nigeria is in desperate need to beef up her position as a strategic logistic hub and seamless clearance is at its centre. The ease of doing business and logistics performance index rankings must all improve. To do this effectively, relevant agencies must arise to this wake-up call and there is no better time to do this than now. CRFFN is therefore presenting a memorandum at the 2017 (15th) National Council on Transportation for its consideration and approval of a Platform for Inter–Agencies cooperation and collaboration to meet regularly so as to enhance efficiency, safety and security at the Nation’s Ports and Land Border Stations.

Thank you.