

ClearView is an ‘SME single window’ – a low-cost web-based service for SMEs which provides a single location where customs and regulatory documentation can be generated and stored, and from where it can be submitted to several agencies, This saves time and increases the accuracy of trade documents for use in the international transport of goods.

Problem

International trade relies on the flow of large amounts of information from the companies involved to the governments and customs agencies of the countries involved (including transit companies). The demands made upon this documentation are increasing, in response to an emphasis on security of transport. Inaccuracies or delays in the documentation lead to problems with the transit of goods, and a loss of competitiveness.

Electronic approaches to documentation management are well established, including the use of EDI and the adoption of single window technologies by large ports and multinational corporations. However, the investment required to use these technologies is substantial, and prohibitive for SMEs. In order to remain competitive, SMEs need a low-cost e-documentation solution

Project

ClearView offers such a low-cost solution – a web-based single window for SMEs, which enables them to create and manage the documentation needed for international trade. ClearView uses the most up-to-date international messaging and documentation standards.

Objectives of the Project

- To establish the viability of ClearView as a commercial business offering in Ireland, Latvia, Greece and Slovenia
- To raise the profile and awareness of the legislative and standards contexts which will impact on SMEs involved in international trade (AEO, CTPAT, etc.)
- To support the competitiveness of the SME sector by providing it with an accessible and convenient single window solution

Project Description - Context

The legislative and regulatory context in which international trade takes place requires the generation and transmission of substantial numbers of documents. Ongoing strategic work at a European level is driving the uptake of electronic customs; at the same time, new transport security requirements (originating to a large degree in the US) are stimulating the adoption of certification schemes for international traders. These factors combine to place pressure on the SME sector to adopt e-documentation. However, the investment required is substantial, while the standards on which the technologies are based are evolving rapidly and can be expected to force upgrades and changes in any technologies put in place.

ClearView offers a service to SMEs whereby they can use a web application to generate the documentation required by e-customs, and to create the other documentation required by regulatory bodies such as government departments. The service also supports the creation and management of the information needed for each step of the logistics chain, from production to freight forwarding to international transit to arrival and customs clearance. The ClearView team are closely involved in the standards process, ensuring that the service complies with the standards as they evolve.

The ClearView service is being validated by teams of SMEs in four countries (Ireland, Latvia, Greece and Slovenia). The SMEs are signed up as users of the service and then use it to interface with the regulatory bodies in their countries, in the countries to which they export and in transit countries. The nature of the interface reflects the requirements of the SMEs – it may vary from the creation of paper SAD documents to electronic communication with national e-customs platforms. The validation process includes multilingual translation, adjustments to reflect differing layouts of regulatory documents and interfacing the ClearView software with third party software providers. Feedback from pilots and from audiences at dissemination events is used to inform the technical team, who then adjust the software as necessary.

The target groups for ClearView are SMEs engaged in international trade. They are being accessed via chambers of commerce, international trade organisations and industry champions.

Deployment of the service will use an application service provider model, with a centralised data and services server to which SMEs across Europe gain access over the Web. Dissemination and marketing will be carried out through a network of national partners, who enjoy strong relationships with SMEs through being themselves chambers of commerce or SME representative organisations.

The service aims to be profitable in the medium term, through subscription and per-shipment charges. The precise details of the pricing model are one of the key subjects of this market validation phase. The size of the market and the value of the offering are both very significant, and meetings with SMEs have already indicated that there is a strong demand for such a service, further stimulated by the ongoing evolution of the legislative context.

Partners

- **CP3 Group**, a software development company responsible for creating and hosting the ClearView service
- **Pintail**, a consultancy and services company responsible for business planning and dissemination planning
- **I2i**, a third party software provider with which the ClearView software is being integrated, to establish the feasibility and cost of this process, while also providing additional (electronic certificate of origin) services to SMEs
- **Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**, which is leading the piloting work in Latvia and also responsible for dissemination and promotion in Latvia
- **Hellenic Irish Business Association**, an SME representative organisation, which is leading the piloting work in Greece and also responsible for dissemination and promotion in Greece
- **Arctur d.o.o.**, a group of Slovenian companies which is leading the piloting work in Slovenia and also responsible for dissemination and promotion in Slovenia
- **Irish Exporters Association**, an SME body, which is leading the piloting work in Ireland and also responsible for dissemination and promotion in Ireland

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