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Network of Trusted Networks

IPCSA initiative promises visibility and certainty in the supply chain

In the drive for trade facilitation, the efficient flow of accurate information is just as vital as the efficient flow of the physical cargoes. But how much is guesswork?

The Challenges:

For many shippers and logistics operators trying to plan cost-effective, time-efficient supply chains, the lack of visibility is a real obstacle. For example:

- There can be a dozen or more different vessel ETAs, depending on the source of the information.
- The information shippers need is fragmented and sourced from a variety of points in the supply chain. Visit the website of the relevant port, shipping line and forwarder and ask 'Where is my ship?' – usually all the answers will be different.
- Much of the information is based on estimates and predictions – or is simply out of date.
- Once a container is onboard, shippers have to rely on the shipping line's tracking data. The ship could be diverted or delayed by two weeks but the official ETA isn't changed. The result: a haulier booked in the wrong place on the wrong day, dwell time charges if a container has to sit on the quay waiting to be cleared and collected.

The Solution:

- Shippers need accurate, real-time data – and that is exactly what will be provided through a unique Trade Facilitation initiative being developed by the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA).
- IPCSA has developed a 'Network of Trusted Networks'. Within this Network, Port Community Systems (PCS) are able to connect and share information via a specially created common shared global standard, based on API (Application Program Interface).

- For more than 40 years, PCSs have acted as trusted third parties for their customers, enabling communication among port and airport companies, users and stakeholders through a hub-and-spoke model. PCSs provide authentication services, directory and delivery services, message transformation and applications to their customers in their port communities.

- Through IPCSA's Network of Trusted Networks, PCSs will also become trusted parties to each other, relying on the authentication of another PCS to identify a new user.

- IPCSA has developed a Track & Trace API for exchanging information relating to port calls and container shipment information. The ultimate plan is a 'federation of PCSs' which can develop new value-added services for logistics operators, thanks to new global standards.

- In parallel, Community Systems serving the air cargo industry will use the same API to provide the same transparency.

IPCSA's Network of Trusted Networks and Track & Trace initiatives deliver predictability, visibility and certainty within the supply chain – supporting existing PCS users, based on existing infrastructure, without the need to create any new operational systems.

Further Information

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