



# IPCSA

International Port  
Community Systems  
Association



Simple, efficient solutions for  
swift and smooth supply chains

## How to develop a Port Community System



## Guide Contents

	PAGE
1. Introduction to Port Community Systems	03
2. Port Community Systems and Single Window - The Strategic Alliance	03
3. Purpose of the Guide	04
4. How to use the Guide	04
5. How to Develop a Port Community System - The Twelve Actions	05
6. Learning from Experience	09
7. About IPCSA	10
8. IPCSA Membership	11



## 1 Introduction to Port Community Systems

A **Port Community System** is an electronic platform which connects the multiple systems operated by a variety of organisations that make up a seaport, airport or inland port community. It is shared in the sense that it is set up, organised and used by firms in the same sector – in this case, a port community.

### A Port Community System;

- Is a neutral and open electronic platform enabling intelligent and secure exchange of information between public and private stakeholders in order to improve the efficiency and competitive position of the sea and airports' communities.
- Optimises, manages and automates smooth port and logistics processes through a single submission of data and by connecting transport and logistics chains.

## 2 Port Community Systems and Single Window

### The Strategic Alliance

A PCS provides for the electronic exchange of information between all port and logistics sectors and is acknowledged as the most advanced method for the exchange of information within a single or national port community infrastructure.

A PCS has the ability to act as a National Single Window or to integrate into a National Single Window which European Member States are developing in response to recent Directives and policy from the European Commission.

A PCS is therefore pivotal in the Single Window concept and will reduce duplication of data input through efficient electronic exchange of information.

**Port Community Systems are managed and maintained by an Operator and it is critical that this Operator remains neutral and independent and acts as a trusted third party. By definition, a Port Community System Operator:**

- is a public, private or public/private organisation that operates and maintains a Port Community System and where the Port Community System represents the core of that organisation's business.
- has a board, or some form of steering committee, made up of representatives from different internal and external groups within the port and logistics community.
- has 'service level agreements' with PCS users to manage the electronic exchange of information between different parties on their behalf.



### 3 Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to provide a simple outline to organisations, whether they be port authorities, Customs authorities, government departments or agencies, or users of sea, air and inland ports, of the basic steps to developing a Port Community System to suit the environment in which they operate and provide the solution to the business bottlenecks or delays that can create inefficiencies at sea, air and inland ports.

This Guide does not lay down a definitive way in which a PCS should be created but rather gives an outline to show organisations how this issue relates to their local circumstances.

### 4 How to use the Guide

We recommend that the Guide is used just as that – as a guide. It is split into 12 Actions; each Action provides a headline for the key requirements to setting up a successful PCS. The term ‘port’ refers to a sea, air or inland port.

The right time to develop a PCS will depend on locality and stakeholder involvement. The critical elements of developing a successful PCS are stakeholder ‘buy-in’ and the selection of a ‘trusted operator’.



## 5 How to develop a Port Community System

### The Twelve Actions



### Action 1

#### Create a Common Understanding of a Port Community System

To start the development of a Port Community System, it is critical that a common understanding is agreed of what a PCS is and can do in your local region. We recommend using the IPCSA definition.

## Action 2

### Why choose to have a Port Community System?

#### The Reason

- To reduce inefficiencies in port business processes
- To facilitate the smooth flow of electronic data
- To integrate and achieve compliance with international, regional and national regulation, guidelines and directives

#### Community

- It is formed by the community for the community
- The community are, in general, shareholders of the PCS Operator
- Electronic facilitation of trade through improved data exchange will mean fewer delays in cargo movements

## Action 3

### How to Start Developing a PCS - the Community

#### Community 'buy-in'

- Bring together the community around the port, including port authorities, users, shipping lines, Customs and other business or government agencies that have an interest.

**This is the biggest challenge...**

#### Agree a lead:

- Identify a lead in the project with the responsibility to bring the community together and act independently of its own interests to act in the interests of the community.

#### Identify the legal and business model, including finance:

- Identify the development finance to create a legal and business model that the community will see as a 'trusted and honest broker'.

**This is critical to a successful PCS implementation...**

"A PCS Operator is an organisation that is either public, private or public/private that operates and maintains a Port Community System and where the Port Community System represents the core of that organisation's business."



## Action 4

### Ambassadors

- Identify one or more 'Ambassadors' to promote the PCS concept and development within your locality and abroad.
- Through the Ambassadors, gain an understanding of how other Port Community Systems operate and how this relates to your local circumstances.



## Action 5

### Communication

- Keep all stakeholders advised of progress – for example, ports, government ministries, shipping lines, port users, Customs, OGAs, etc.
- Open the communication as a two-way approach, taking examples and asking opinions.



## Action 6

### Identification of Core Business Processes to be Addressed

All locations are different. There will be significant similarities but different regions have different stakeholders with varying interests and, of course, different business processes.

- Agree with community core processes.
- Outline key challenges relating to existing processes and outline benefits of a simplified electronic approach.



## Action 7

### Customs Integration

- It is all about Customs procedures reforms.
- Work through World Customs Organization (WCO) guidance.
- Stakeholders moving to Authorised Economic Operators (AEO).
- Think Port Community System.

“A Single Electronic Window System that aggregates, optimises, orchestrates, secures supply chain business processes for stakeholders, enabling Customs to focus on high-risk cargo.”



## Action 8

### Legal Framework

Consider within which legal frameworks the PCS will need to work – for example, Data Protection Acts, Marine Acts and Directives, Customs Acts and procedures. The legal framework of the PCS must consider regulations, legislation and Directives in context:

- International/worldwide
- European
- Member State
- Regional/local, e.g. local municipal rules

## Action 9

### PCS Organisation

- Model – private, public or joint public/private
- Shareholding and types of shares
- Financing
- Governance

### The IPCSA definition - a Port Community System Operator:

- is a public, private or public/private organisation that operates and maintains a Port Community System and where the Port Community System represents the core of that organisation's business.
- has a board, or some form of steering committee, made up of representatives from different internal and external groups within the port and logistics community.
- has 'service level agreements' with PCS users to manage the electronic exchange of information between different parties on their behalf.



## Action 10

### Development Groups

Identify key community stakeholders to work in development groups to resolve and develop the electronic solution to the identified business processes.

- **Experts in groups for each business process**
- **Timeline and process management** (which processes rely on others to be created first or second to limit delays?)

## Action 11

### Use Existing Knowledge of Port Community Systems

- Don't start from scratch.
- Share knowledge and experience.
- Import knowledge where necessary.

## Action 12

### Long-term Operation

To create a sustainable PCS and PCS Operator, it is imperative to identify the following:

- **Revenue streams**  
**Most Port Community Systems use a mixed revenue stream mainly around:**
  - annual or monthly subscription fee by services or for all services
  - fee per unit charge (tonnage, Customs declaration, TEU, barrel, vessel, hour...)**or per service charge**  
**or per EDI transaction charge**
  - fee per stakeholder
- **Ongoing development**
- **Updating systems to comply with international, EU and national regulations and Directives.**

## 6

## Learning from Experience

Port Community Systems provide 'simple, efficient solutions for swift and smooth supply chains'. IPCSA provides an ideal learning platform for those organisations looking to develop their own PCS in their region.

## 7

## About IPCSA

IPCSA is the successor to the European Port Community Systems Association (EPCSA), which was launched in June 2011 by six founding members, all European-based Port Community System Operators.

IPCSA and its members play a vital role in global trade facilitation; the electronic communications platforms provided by Port Community Systems ensure smooth transport and logistics operations at hundreds of seaports, airports and inland ports.

EPCSA was originally formed in June 2011 by SOGET, Le Havre, France; MCP, Felixstowe, UK; Portic, Barcelona, Spain; Portbase, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, Netherlands, dbh, Bremen, Germany; and DAKOSY, Hamburg, Germany. The reason for forming EPCSA was that Port Community System Operators (PCSOs) did not have a common lobbying position at the European Union. The European Commission was, and still is, developing a number of initiatives and Directives such as e-customs, e-freight and e-maritime and the leading PCSOs agreed that they needed work together in areas of common interest.

On 1st September 2014, the association changed from a European to an international association to better reflect its growing international membership.

## Mission Statement

### IPCSA's Mission is to:

“influence public policy at the international level, principally by lobbying, in order to promote the adoption of e-logistics as the key element in the development of international maritime, shipping and logistics sectors.”

In order to achieve its mission, IPCSA has agreed the following objectives:

- To ensure that the importance of Port Community Systems Operators is recognised internationally and in the EU and its Member States and that the sector is consulted substantively on any measure likely to affect it;
- To encourage all port communities to be proactive in Port Community System development;
- To ensure that Port Community Systems Operators play their full part in delivering e-services internationally;
- To promote the highest possible standards in European and international Port Community System Operators.

## 8

## IPCSA Membership

IPCSA is a membership organisation that maintains close contacts between its members and its executive. The association relies on members being proactive in the development of PCSs and also for support in attending and representing IPCSA at relevant regional, national, and international events, meetings and seminars. IPCSA encourages Port Community System Operators and Port Authorities to become members.

### The benefits of IPCSA membership are:

- Regular membership updates covering latest European and international policy and other matters that have an impact on PCSs.
- Access to the IPCSA members' website, which contains a library of documents, articles and IPCSA meeting information.
- Access to the IPCSA members' discussion forum.
- Opportunities to host IPCSA meetings.
- Support from the Secretary General.
- Networking with similar organisations as well as international organisations.
- Plaque confirming IPCSA membership.
- Attendance at IPCSA workshops and meetings.
- Attendance at IPCSA Annual Conference.

If your organisation is not a Port Community System Operator or a Port Authority but has an interest in PCSs, please contact the Secretary General.

IPCSA welcomes the opportunity to discuss other types of membership, particularly with international or regional associations as well as research institutes, universities and other academic organisations.

**For further information on IPCSA, please visit [www.ipcsa.international](http://www.ipcsa.international) or contact:**

Richard Morton  
Secretary General  
T: 0044 7796 334960  
E: richard.morton@ipcsa.international

### Registered Office:

International Port Community Systems Association EEIG  
The Chapel, Maybush Lane  
Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 7LL, UK  
EEIG Grouping Nos. GE000268



For more information visit

 [www.ipcsa.international](http://www.ipcsa.international)