EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the scanning system of the scanning unit at Sri Lanka Customs there were lot of delays in the process where scan cycle time took a considerable time to complete with lot of manual and lengthy procedures. From the start of the process to the end of the process there was repetition of work which resulted many unwanted steps required to complete the scanning procedures which had direct impact to the performance and efficiency of the unit. As a result of manual work load officers at the scanning unit were unable to pay the complete attention to analysing of containers scanned and as a result department could not get the maximum benefits from the scanning unit.

Purpose of this study was to understand the existing scanning process at Container Scanning Unit and identify the critical points, that would require improvements, to investigate the layout and process time taken for each task connected with the above process, to explore how the above system can improved using technology and procedures to suggest best procedures to improve the performance of the scanning system. During the study it was aimed to identify the key factors which have direct impact to the performance of the scanning unit and what causes delays in the existing process.

In this project writer collected both primary and secondary data at scanning unit to identify the existing process and gaps which needs to be addressed. Techniques such as interviews, observations, documentary analysis and writers own experiences were applied as research methodologies. Process flow charts were drawn to clarify the existing procedures and analyse the problems in current processes. Interviews were carried out with the existing staff at the scanning unit including the Supervising Officers and Assistant Superintendents. Observations of existing process were taken place and writes own experiences were blended to investigate the problems.

Key finding of this study were that currently in the scanning unit all processes are operated manually with repetition of work, duplication data entries, manual signing and sealing procedures, physical document movements. It was identified that as a result scanning process takes considerable delays and much time is allocated to other supporting work than the time spent for analysing the scan images. No adequate training has given for officers about the scanning process and they were learning with their own experience which took a considerable time to learn on their own. As a result there is a considerable

time and effort taken to conduct container scans at the scanning unit of Sri Lanka Customs which has reduced the performance of the Scanning Unit.

In conclusion it was evident that manual and lengthy procedures has resulted significant delays in the current operation of the container scanning unit of Sri Lanka Customs and as a result department has failed to get the maximum use of the scanning unit. Existing process was required to redesign in a way where it leads to efficient use of new technology. Application of Information Technology was understood as a critical point where the scanning unit can achieve maximum benefits with introduction of innovation to replace the lengthy manual procedures. It was also observed that staff at the scanning unit required comprehensive training to get the maximum output from them.

Key recommendations of this study for the performance improvement in the container scanning unit of Sri Lanka customs were to design an IT system for the scanning unit which is capable of communicating with the main computer system of Sri Lanka Customs. Thereby the scan unit system can fetch the required data from the main system and it can save time taken for manual data entries and physical document movements. Also there were three main processes identified which covers the entire cycle of scanning process and those were redesigned in a way which can be applied in the newly introduced system. Training of staff was also identified as a key recommendation where comprehensive training should be provided them to get the maximum use of information technology.