

As part of Wichita's International Trade Study - the region's blueprint for a competitive global market position - the Technology Assessment examines the variety of technologies available to facilitate international trade through more efficient, secure and cost effective goods movement.

A four-step process evaluates the technologies most beneficial to Wichita while continually involving stakeholders throughout the process:

1. **User Assessment** – establishes the foundation for the technology assessment, by providing an overview of the user requirements from the Technology Assessment Stakeholder Group
2. **System Requirements** – draws solutions based on the stakeholder group's user requirements. These requirements form the basis for user services and system requirements for the Wichita region to facilitate international trade.
3. **Preliminary Findings** – provides a synopsis of the results for the stakeholders to assess the viability of the technology solutions in making the concept a successful reality
4. **Technology Assessment Report** – the final step in the process results in recommendations for proposed technologies and systems that can be used, as well as cost estimates for technology related resources and a technology testing protocol to support a future pilot test program

**This summary provides an update on the first two steps in the process.**

**USER ASSESSMENT:** First, the Technology Assessment Stakeholder Group was assembled from mail-in survey follow-on contacts and other companies that expressed interest in the overall study. The 15 companies that represent the Stakeholder Group were asked questions

covering background and demographic information about the company and questions that focused on:

1. Characterization of current freight operations
2. Current use of technologies and information exchange in day-to-day freight operations
3. Opportunities for improved efficiencies and benefits from the implementation of technologies
4. Business goals and desired outcomes from the introduction of technologies
5. Planned future use of technologies in day-to-day freight operations

A common thread in stakeholder comments is how technology can improve the flow of goods and information throughout the supply chain. About 50 percent of the stakeholder group performs a majority of its international trade using Internet/email, but more than 85 percent of the stakeholder group is not aware of specific technology available to improve trade. More than 75 percent of the stakeholder group indicated that improved efficiencies in training, scheduling, and service could have the biggest impact with technology implementation.

**Overall, this assessment demonstrates the need for substantial education of technology solutions that may help solve freight transportation issues and challenges, and improve the efficiency, growth, and diversity of international trade for stakeholders.**

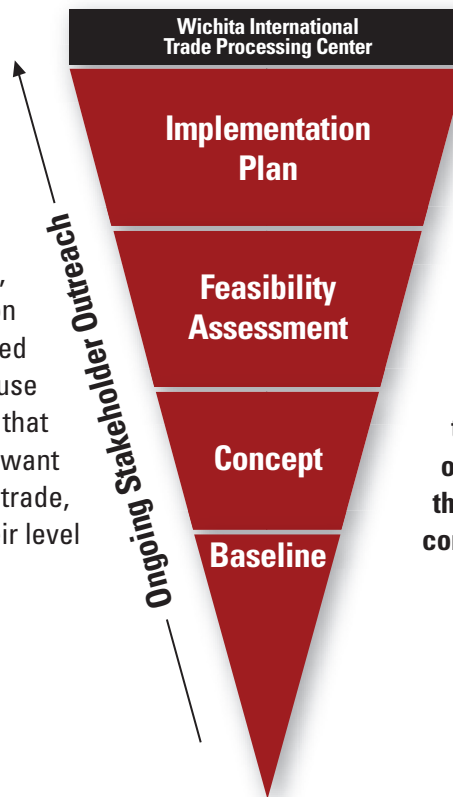
**SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS:** Limited advance cargo and shipping information reduces a transportation providers' ability to efficiently plan for and manage cargo moves. The lack of timely notification of inbound loads; details related to the cargo and movement instructions; and accurate location/tracking information creates a number of inefficiencies. In addition to delays and inefficiencies within the supply chain, there also is an impact on dwell

time, which can result in higher freight costs. All of this can be severe for businesses that rely on timely cargo delivery.

Currently there are a number of technologies commercially available or soon to be available that can facilitate more efficient freight movement by increasing the visibility of shipments and equipment throughout a supply chain. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Roadside Automated Vehicle Identification (AVI), and Trailer or Chassis Tracking are expected to improve the exchange of timely and accurate information among supply chain partners. These technologies have been evaluated through extensive field testing, and in many instances, have been in widespread use for more than a decade.

Based on the user requirements developed during the user assessment part of this study, there appears to be merit in the initial concept of developing a secure clearinghouse of Web-based, international trade-related information and services for use by authorized stakeholders. A virtual clearinghouse could be developed in a manner that supports the needs of companies that want to become involved in international trade, and for those that want to increase their level of international trade.

This concept could be a collaborative electronic environment where information and ideas are exchanged among stakeholders, while simultaneously protecting privacy and the proprietary nature of business. The concept also could include a blend of information and services providing links to trade-related educational information, U.S. trade laws, import/export requirements and documents, trade events, and trade leads. This blend of information and services could also provide links that incorporate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies that improve the stakeholders' ability to move goods more efficiently and exchange information in a more timely and accurate manner.



**NEXT STEPS:** Preliminary findings and a full Technology Assessment Report will be completed soon. A summary will be available for distribution and information from the report will be incorporated into the overall Wichita International Trade Study. As part of the study, organizers will more fully examine the “clearinghouse” concept as well as the financial, technical, political and business feasibility of an international trade processing center in Wichita. Based on this information, an implementation plan that is made up of all study components will be completed and shared with the community.