

## ***United Nations Framework and Recommendations for International Electronic Business Facilitation***

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### **Abstract**

Within the United Nations framework of the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves as the focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. Accordingly United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) was established, as a subsidiary, intergovernmental body of the UNECE Committee on Trade, mandated to develop a program of work of global relevance to achieve improved worldwide coordination and cooperation in these areas. Domestic development and distribution of electronic documents to be conformed to international standards, it is enough to have the role of international activities continue to supply part of the domestic industry and the trends in participation and international standard.

**Key words :** Trade Facilitation, UNECE, UN/CEFACT, WRO, WCO, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, ISO, ITU, IEC

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

UN / CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business) for global trade facilitation and electronic commerce of the United Nations Organization for Standardization as UN / ECE (ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) operates. Developed countries, especially developing countries, and improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations in transition economies, supported by the UN in order to facilitate the growth of global commerce through the exchange of services and products to effectively appropriate standards organizations.

An important feature of the UN / CEFACT is that constitutes the policy at the level of the work of UN / CEFACT, the Union and the private sector, with the participation of hundreds of private-sector technical experts,

practitioners and organizations within the UN / CEFACT. Due to such participation, in relation to the private sector and public institutions will be directed by a new cooperative relationship, industry, intergovernmental organizations, and the organization participation of the member states of the United Nations under the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC; Economic and Social Council of the United Nations) approved by opening. The purpose of the UN / CEFACT is to develop mechanisms to facilitate recommendations and criterion, and actively embrace the mechanism involved.

The important mission of the UN / CEFACT developed countries, developing countries, and effectively improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations in transition economies, the products and services by exchanging is to encourage the growth of global commerce. Of global trade facilitation and coordination, UN / ECE, United Nations agencies for consultation, which was founded in 1997, are agency of the lower parts. In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has become a close complementary relationship of the nature of the duties performed.

## 2. NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION BODIES

Trade facilitation involves the simplification, standardization and harmonization of procedures and associated information flows required to move goods from seller to buyer and to make payment. As this encompasses both commercial and regulatory processes, it should be approached on a partnership basis between governments and trade in order to ensure that practical and implementable solutions are developed. UN/CEFACT Recommendation Number 4 addresses this issue by suggesting that Governments establish and support national trade facilitation bodies or committees with balanced private and public sector participation in order to:

- Identify issues affecting the cost and efficiency of their country's international trade;
- Develop measures to reduce the cost and improve the efficiency of international trade;
- Assist in the implementation of those measures;
- Provide a national focal point for the collection and dissemination of information on best practices in international trade facilitation; and
- Participate in international efforts to improve trade facilitation and efficiency.

### 2.1 Applied Technology Group (ATG)

The purpose of the Applied Technologies Group (ATG) is to be responsible for the creation and maintenance of the trade, business and administration document structures that are based on a specific technology or standard. The function of the ATG is the design, assembly and production of syntax specific solutions based on identified business and/or technical requirements from the empowered groups of UN/CEFACT.

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of various implementation syntaxes, protocols and mechanisms for the packaging of data for exchange, the functions of UN/CEFACT, and its groups. In addition Heads of Delegations may invite technical experts from their constituency to participate in the work. Experts are expected to contribute to the work based solely on their expertise and to comply with the UN/CEFACT Code of Ethics. [N.B. This text is subject to approval by the UN/CEFACT Plenary]

Two working groups have been formed within the ATG, each with its own scope of work and responsibilities.

ATG1 - EDIFACT Syntax Structures is the home for the work formerly done by the EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) T1 Technical Assessment body and will continue to focus on

EDIFACT-related work to include development, maintenance and technical assessment responsibility for:

UNSM Design Rules  
UNSM Design  
ISO/9735

ATG2 - XML Syntax is responsible for the development and maintenance of XML syntax solutions to support the UN/CEFACT work program. This will include:

XML schema production based on identified requirements from the XML empowered groups of UN/CEFACT.

Develop and maintain procedures and mechanisms to ensure timely and good quality production of the XML syntax solutions

Develop and maintain appropriate technical specifications to ensure consistent application of the XML syntax

### 2.2 Forum Management Group

The Forum Management Group was established in September 2004 after a restructuring of the UN/CEFACT organization in May 2004. The FMG is directly responsible for the management of the Forum. Its responsibilities include:

Executing the programme of work of the Forum approved by the Plenary, ensuring coordination of related work among PGs, preventing any work duplication among PGs, reporting to the Bureau;

Preparing the UN/CEFACT Forum meetings;

Developing and maintaining one set of general operational procedures for the Forum, including PG membership requirements, requirements for reporting and publishing, actions, voting results and other decisions and ensuring that these procedures are consistently followed by the PGs;

Managing the overall implementation of the Open Development Process and making recommendations to the Bureau and the Plenary on any required modifications to those procedures;

Coordinate the provision of resources to the PGs, working in conjunction with the UNECE secretariat. This includes external resources;

Provide recommendations to the Bureau on the structure of the Forum;

Resolve disputes which may arise within the Forum.

Disputes which cannot be resolved by the FMG are referred to the Bureau;

Coordination of Forum promotion and communication activities in cooperation with the Bureau.

UN/CEFACT is in the unique position to create Global eBusiness standards for the purpose of facilitating trade worldwide. In cooperation with OASIS it has created the ebXML standard, which is leading the world into a new era, where business will be done over the Internet and businesses and governments will collaborate at a higher level to achieve the largest cost savings.

The FMG is to provide the overall operational management of the UN/CEFACT Forum and is determined to accelerate delivery of standards the world is waiting for. The FMG will provide the Project Management to ensure that new project proposals are assigned to the appropriate permanent group to prevent duplication. The FMG will launch a Sponsorship programme to provide for the necessary funding of the work.

The FMG membership is comprised of the chairs of the five permanent UN/CEFACT groups plus two additional members of TBG. The FMG Chair and Vice-Chair have been elected by the UN/CEFACT Forum.

The semi-annual UN/CEFACT Forum is the concurrent meeting of all permanent UN/CEFACT Groups at one time in the same location to facilitate close liaison and full interaction as a single working body.

Priorities at the Forum will be:

- Implementing the new organizational structure, Programme Development Areas (PDAs)
- Advancing current projects and domain activities
- Ongoing maintenance tasks (such as UN/EDIFACT Data Maintenance Requests)
- Formulating and approving new projects under the new structure
- Development of the Programme of Work for 2012-2013
- Continuing liaison activities with external organisations
- Implementing Bureau Programme Support (BPS) activities

### **2.3 Multi-Agency Working Groups on Trade Facilitation (TFWG)**

In addition to national trade and transport facilitation bodies which have been set up in many countries, there exist also other forms of a dialogue on trade facilitation issues. Thus, in the framework of the WTO negotiations on trade

facilitation, the issue of agency coordination and consultation has come back to the forefront of country's preoccupations.

Multi-agency or sectoral working groups, task forces or committees can provide the required expertise and technical backstopping during the negotiations and provide a platform for dialogue with private sector. UNCTAD and UNECE are developing a repository on national experiences with setting up and sustaining an institutional coordinating mechanism. The objective is to share experiences of such trade facilitation working groups (TFWG) and identify common challenges and solutions to these challenges. The received information can be consulted at the relevant pages of the UNECE and of the UNCTAD websites, respectively.

A document Draft revised mandate, terms of reference and rules of procedure for UN/CEFACT (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15) was submitted to the 16th UN/CEFACT Plenary (8-10 December 2010). It was revised in the light of comments received and the revised text (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15Rev. 1) was submitted for review and intersessional approval by Heads of Delegation by 28 March 2011. A few editorial changes were made through the intersessional approval process.

The present document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15/Rev. 2 has been developed by the Bureau, after consultation with the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Heads of Delegation (HODs), and it incorporates changes arising out of the foregoing consultations

The web site provides:

- Trade Facilitation Recommendations
- Electronic Business Standards
- Technical Specifications

The original document entitled "Mandate, Terms of Reference and Procedures for UN/CEFACT" (TRADE/R.650) was approved by WP.4, the predecessor to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business' (UN/CEFACT), at its final meeting in September 1996 and was later approved by the Committee on the Development of Trade in December 1996. Subsequently, organizational changes, a change in organization name and experience gained from operating the Centre resulted in revisions to the original document, the last being Revision 4 which was approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary in June 2006.

for the three pillars - processes, information and technology - that are vital in the development of world trade.

UN/CEFACT, a subsidiary intergovernmental body of the UNECE Committee on Trade, is mandated to develop a

programme of work of global relevance to achieve improved worldwide coordination and cooperation in the areas of trade facilitation and electronic business, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. It encourages close collaboration between governments and private business to secure the interoperability for the exchange of information between the public and private sector. UN/CEFACT and its predecessor have developed such instruments as:

- The UN Layout Key for Trade Documents, which is the foundation for the EU's Single Administrative Document (SAD)
- UN/EDIFACT, the international standard for electronic data interchange
- numerous trade facilitation recommendations
- the Core Component Library, containing syntax-neutral and technology-independent building blocks that can be used for data modeling
- XML schemas providing a series of coherent, consistent and normalised syntax solutions that are aligned with domain reference models for publication.

The Plenary Bureau draws to the attention of UN/CEFACT Experts, Priorities at the Forum will be:

- Implementing the new organizational structure, which involves Programme Development Areas (PDAs)
- Advancing current projects and domain activities
- Ongoing maintenance tasks (such as UN/EDIFACT Data Maintenance Requests)
- Formulating and approving new projects under the new structure
- Development of the Programme of Work for 2012-2013
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### **3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

UN/CEFACT regularly reports on its activities to the UNECE Committee on Trade and, when invited, also reports to the UNECE Executive Committee. UN/CEFACT supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce. This is achieved by:

- Analyzing and understanding the key elements of

international processes, procedures and transactions and working for the elimination of constraints;

- Developing methods to facilitate processes, procedures and transactions, including the relevant use of information technologies;
- Promoting both the use of these methods, and associated best practices, through channels such as government, industry and service associations;
- Coordinating its work with other international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), notably in the context of a Memorandum of Understanding for a Global Facilitation Partnership for Transport and Trade;
- Securing coherence in the development of Standards and Recommendations by co-operating with other interested parties, including international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

In particular, for UN/CEFACT Standards, this coherence is facilitated by cooperating with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs), especially in the context of the ISO/IEC/ITU/UNECE Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). These relationships have been established and maintained in recognition of the broad application that UN/CEFACT work has in areas beyond global commerce and the key objectives of interoperability between applications and the ability to support multilingual environments.

The UN/CEFACT Forum, held twice a year, is a meeting of UN/CEFACT experts at one time in the same location and facilitates close liaison and full interaction. These UN/CEFACT experts develop trade facilitation Recommendations, eBusiness Standards and their supporting Technical Specifications.

Within the United Nations framework of the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves as the focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. In this context, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

(UN/CEFACT) was established, as a subsidiary, inter-governmental body of the UNECE Committee on Trade, mandated to develop a programme of work of global relevance to achieve improved worldwide coordination and cooperation in these areas.

UN/CEFACT supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce.



**Richard Dollein** has been a CEO of DÖLLOMATIK at Burgebrach, which is currently the only specialized craft operating in Bavaria, in the field of manufacturing and marketing automatic sliding door systems with their own development. He is interested in the areas of automatic control and security in the bank and airport fields.

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