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UN/CEFACT structure, mandate, terms of reference, and procedures

Executive Guides on UN/CEFACT deliverables

Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau

Summary

In order to provide a high level of visibility to UN/CEFACT's standards and other technical deliverables, the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, will prepare a series of non-technical summaries of the deliverables to reach high-level policy makers and a general audience. This document explains the concept, target audience, content and structure of Executive Guides.

This document is presented to the Plenary for noting*.

* This document is submitted in line with the Programme of work of the UN/CEFACT for 2015-2016
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I. Introduction

1. UN/CEFACT has a number of deliverables ranging from recommendations to standards to guidelines to libraries, including standardized messages, Business Requirement Specifications (BRS), Requirements Specification Mapping (RSM), and Message Implementation Guides (MIG). The recommendations benefit from a global and constant visibility and are well-referenced worldwide. The technical specifications are also used around the globe; however, they generally do not benefit from the same level of visibility.
2. UN/CEFACT provides deliverables for high-level deciders and policymakers. This target audience usually does not have the technical background to fully understand the applicability or usefulness of UN/CEFACT's technical deliverables. Therefore, acronyms such as BRS, RSM and MIG (amongst many others) are not directly understandable and it is unclear to them how these could be used in their governments, companies or departments. Even when the acronyms are spelled out, it is likely that they will not understand how these deliverables might benefit them.

II. The Executive Guides and UN/CEFACT's goals

3. One of UN/CEFACT's goals is to support governments and businesses through the provision of e-business standards to facilitate trade. It is, therefore, important – and often requested – that UN/CEFACT promote its deliverables and offer guidance on them.
4. In order to provide a high level of visibility to UN/CEFACT's standards and other technical deliverables, these need to be presented in such a way as to attract a non-technical audience and ideally target high-level deciders so that everyone will be able to benefit. This is the principal idea behind the development of Executive Guides. It is essential, for this, that the proposed Executive Guides follow a few basic concepts:
 - Be short;
 - Be clear / use layman's terms (technical terms will need to be explained so as to make even complex technical standards understandable to any high-level government official); and
 - Use a common template (in order to show consistency between UN/CEFACT deliverables).
5. It should be kept in mind that such high-level Executive Guides could eventually have other uses, such as promotional material and presentations on related websites (such as the "Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide/TFIG").

III. Target audience

6. The target audience for recommendations is, for example, readers that come from high levels of government administrations, trade organizations, and high levels of management of private companies. It is of essence to be brief and to the point even for complex issues.
7. Any proposed Executive Guide material should be able to be clearly understood by anyone, even those not familiar with technical standards.

IV. Deliverables of an Executive Guide

8. Besides a short (1-2 page) Executive Guide, the following additional deliverables could be considered at the same time:

- An Executive Summary of about one paragraph which sums up the deliverable or set of deliverables;
- Presentation material for use by the secretariat, Bureau Members or others who have permission to make such interventions, when explaining UN/CEFACT deliverables to other organizations. When developing an Executive Guide, the project team could envision an official presentation concerning the given deliverable. Such a presentation could be presented to the Bureau for approval and could become an official UN/CEFACT presentation:
 - If such material is prepared using Microsoft PowerPoint, for example, it would be beneficial to provide text for intended speaking points within the notes.
 - Such materials should be developed without the use of any background template; and without logos. After approval by the Bureau, these can be added by the secretariat and can evolve if the UN/CEFACT template evolves.
- Conformance declarations for individual deliverable could also be a useful resource in order to demonstrate the extent to which UN/CEFACT deliverables are referenced or used around the world. User communities should be encouraged to make self-conformance statements.

V. Proposed structure of the Executive Guide

9. The target length of the text of an Executive Guide should be around one page. This should comprise:

- Background (this is equivalent to the “Preamble” described in the BRS template). This should be about one paragraph;
- Objective/Benefits/Purpose (this could be similar to the “Objective” described in the BRS template). This should be the bulk of the text and should briefly explain:
 - What the deliverable or set of deliverables is meant to do.
 - The benefits of using the deliverable or set of deliverables.

10. This text should be accompanied by a list of the relevant deliverables (and version numbers) and where to find them on the Internet.
