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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Eighth session, 27-30 May 2002

**Proposal for Future Structure and Organisation  
of the UN/CEFACT Permanent Working Groups**

Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG)

This document is submitted to the Centre for approval.

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## **Introduction**

i. The Proposal for Future Structure and Organisation represents the final stage in the development of a cohesive and relevant structure that is consistent with UN/CEFACT's vision and strategy as approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary. It takes into account comments and proposals received from the existing UN/CEFACT Working Groups as part of a formal consultation process.

ii. The CSG recommends that the proposed structure be approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary, and that the existing Working Groups progressively migrate their activities into the new structure with the target launch in the third quarter 2002.

## **Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business**

iii. UN/CEFACT is built upon the three pillars of trade processes and procedures, information, and technology. Its vision is to provide "simple, transparent and effective processes for global commerce". In order to realize this goal, UN/CEFACT must exploit advances in information technology and adopt new approaches to trade facilitation based on simplification and harmonization of business and governmental processes.

## **Overall Structure**

iv. Five UN/CEFACT Groups will be established to form the new UN/CEFACT development structure. The TBG (International Trade & Business Processes Group), ICG (Information Content Management Group) and ATG (Applied Technologies Group) are new operational Groups, with the TMG (Techniques and Methodologies Group) and LG (Legal Group) serving essentially as Support Groups. The basis for the work performed by all Groups will be in accordance with the "Open Development Process for Technical Specifications" as approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary.

## **UN/CEFACT Forum**

v. The semi-annual UN/CEFACT Forum will allow the concurrent meeting in the same location of all the Groups at one time in order to facilitate closer liaison and full interaction as a single working body, with each individual Group having the option to convene further specific Group meetings at their discretion. All UN/CEFACT Group Chairs and Vice-chairs will serve as members of the Forum Management Team.

vi. The groups will structure themselves internally as they deem necessary to undertake their work, e.g. into Working Groups with Project Teams with physical and/or virtual membership. Designated experts work will work in these Project Teams and be tasked with completing an approved project within a predetermined timeframe. In addition, standing project teams may be established for ongoing or recurring functions.

vii. The TBG will be responsible for business and governmental process analysis, best practices, and international trade procedures using the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology to support the development of appropriate trade facilitation and electronic business solutions, including the development and maintenance of UN and UN/ECE Recommendations.

viii. The ICG will be responsible for the management and definition of reusable information blocks retained in a series of libraries.

ix. The ATG will be responsible for the creation of the trade, business and administration document structures that would be deployed by a specific technology or standard such as UN/EDIFACT or XML.

x. The TMG will be responsible for providing all UN/CEFACT Groups with base (meta) ICT specifications, recommendations and education. It will also function as an ICT research group.

xi. The Legal Group (LG) will continue to be responsible for issuing, publishing and presenting analysis and recommendations regarding legal matters related to UN/CEFACT. It will support all UN/CEFACT Groups as well as its own projects as defined by the Plenary.

## **I. Introduction**

1. Trade facilitation is central to the remit of the UN/ECE and has relevance to the development of world trade. To achieve improved worldwide co-ordination of trade facilitation, the UN/ECE established UN/CEFACT in 1997 with a global remit. UN/CEFACT therefore works under the auspices of the UNECE and is supported and closely cooperates with its secretariat.
2. UN/CEFACT supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade, governmental and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transitional economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principle focus is to facilitate international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of procedures and information flows, and so contribute to the growth of global commerce.
3. UN/CEFACT's vision is to provide "simple, transparent and effective processes for global commerce". In order to realize this goal UN/CEFACT must exploit advances in information technology and adopt new approaches to trade facilitation based on simplification and harmonization of business and governmental processes. The three pillars of trade processes, information and technology form the basis for the work of UN/CEFACT.
4. The UN/CEFACT membership (governmental and non-governmental) have requested that the structure of UN/CEFACT Working Groups be reviewed, in order to meet the challenge that the arrival of emerging technologies has brought to trade facilitation and global commerce.
5. This document represents the final stage in the development of a cohesive and relevant structure that is consistent with UN/CEFACT's vision and strategy and that meets the needs of both its users and participants. It is intended as the foundation for supporting UN/CEFACT's work programme for the next five years and beyond. To this end, the CSG has taken into full consideration the valuable input provided through the current consultation process to arrive at the proposed structure as detailed in this paper.
6. The mark of an organization can be defined in the way it faces up to the challenges posed by a changing world. Change can either be viewed as a threat or as an opportunity. It is the CSG view that UN/CEFACT has a great opportunity to see its current Recommendations, products, services and experts augmented by new products, expanded services and additional experts to meet the twin requirements of trade facilitation and e-Business, and the next generation of standards development.

## **II. Background**

7. The March 2001 UN/CEFACT Plenary approved the document "Realization of the UN/CEFACT Vision from an e-Business Standards Strategy" and gave directions to the CSG to follow up on its recommendations and, if required, propose organizational change.
8. The impetus for the proposed reorganization of UN/CEFACT started with this acceptance of the e-Business strategy, the successful completion of the initial phase of the ebXML project in May 2001, and the subsequent proposal by the CSG at its May meeting for a new organizational structure.
9. The CSG established the eBusiness Transition Ad-hoc Working Group (eBTWG) in order to rapidly progress the ebXML work designated to UN/CEFACT and at the same time allow for more detailed consultation on the eventual UN/CEFACT structure.
10. Although the focus and consultation to date has been on the e-Business activities, it was clear from a number of comments from Heads of Delegations, and from the Plenary Chairman, that this opportunity should be used to align the whole structure of UN/CEFACT taking into consideration the increasing convergence of the trade facilitation and e-Business activities. This was reinforced by the view that it would be counterproductive, disruptive and confusing to UN/CEFACT members to review trade facilitation activities at a separate juncture.

11. The CSG consulted with all UN/CEFACT permanent and ad hoc Working Groups as to their views on the structure. It established a formal consultation process that commenced with the EWG meeting in September 2001 and concluded 23 January 2002.

12. Following detailed consideration of the comments and proposals received from the Working Groups, the CSG prepared this paper for UN/CEFACT Plenary.

### **III. Considerations**

13. At a high level, the following served as the base considerations for determining the optimum UN/CEFACT structure:

- The overall process must ensure that the end results are of the highest quality and are of relevance to all UN/CEFACT participants and user communities,
- Users from developed and developing countries, organisations and businesses of all sizes, government and business experts, technology experts and software providers, and standards bodies must be able to work together in an open, inclusive and transparent way,
- Using information modelling to improve fundamentally government and business processes is key to the effective utilisation of current and emerging technology solutions such as the UN Layout Key, UN/EDIFACT, XML, Web Services, etc.
- Business and government processes and procedures must be defined independent of the resulting implementation technologies,
- There must be properly defined processes and procedures to support the prioritisation, coordination and approval of the deliverables under the UN/CEFACT work programme.

14. Within this context, the following served as guiding principles:

- The UN/CEFACT structure must be rational, sustainable, and clearly support the strategic direction of UN/CEFACT. It should reinforce the credibility of UN/CEFACT, its vision and fundamental goals, and readily convey the functional scope and boundaries of its activities.
- The UN/CEFACT structure must support the two core streams of its current activities, both trade facilitation and e-Business in a convergent and seamless manner.
- Empowerment will continue to form the basis of UN/CEFACT's constitution with the understanding that it is a delegated authority and comes with responsibility to the UN/CEFACT Plenary and to its management group, the CSG.
- The implementation of UN/CEFACT's Open Development Process will form the basis for the progression of its work through the adoption a project management driven approach.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on joint meetings across all UN/CEFACT Working Groups in order to:
  - Maximise communication;
  - Reinforce UN/CEFACT's central role;
  - Reduce meeting costs;
  - Take greater advantage of additional professional secretariat services and supporting facilities.
- To align with the terminology now used within the UN, would require a naming change to UN/CEFACT's expert groups. The proposed hierarchical naming structure to be adopted is as follows:
  - Plenary
  - Group
  - Working Group

– Project Team

“Group” is a new term; groups will comprise one or more Working Groups and/or one or more project Teams. To implement this new concept an amendment will be required to document R.650 for presentation to the UN/CEFACT Plenary.

## **IV References**

15. The following reference documents served as the basis on which this proposal was developed: -

- Mandate, Terms of Reference and Procedures for UN/CEFACT (TRADE/R.650/Rev.2)
- UN/CEFACT'S Strategy for Electronic Business (TRADE/CEFACT/2000/21)
- UN/CEFACT'S Open Development Process for Technical Specifications (TRADE/CEFACT/2000/22)
- Realization of the UN/CEFACT Vision from an e-Business Standards Strategy” (TRADE/CEFACT/2001/7/Rev.1)
- The EWG proposal for the future structure and organization for e-Business standardization within UN/CEFACT (CEFACT/EWG/2001/N002)
- The eBWG Consultative Process – open letter, 26 November 2001, from Dr. Christian Fruehwald, Chairman UN/CEFACT and Mr. Ray Walker, Chairman UN/CEFACT Steering Group
- EWG response to CSG consultative process
- TMWG response to CSG consultative process
- eBTWG response to CSG consultative process
- BPAWG response to CSG consultative process
- ITPWG response to CSG consultative process
- CDWG response to CSG consultative process
- Comment disposition log
- UN/CEFACT Forum Transition Plan

## V. Proposed Structure

### Overall Structure

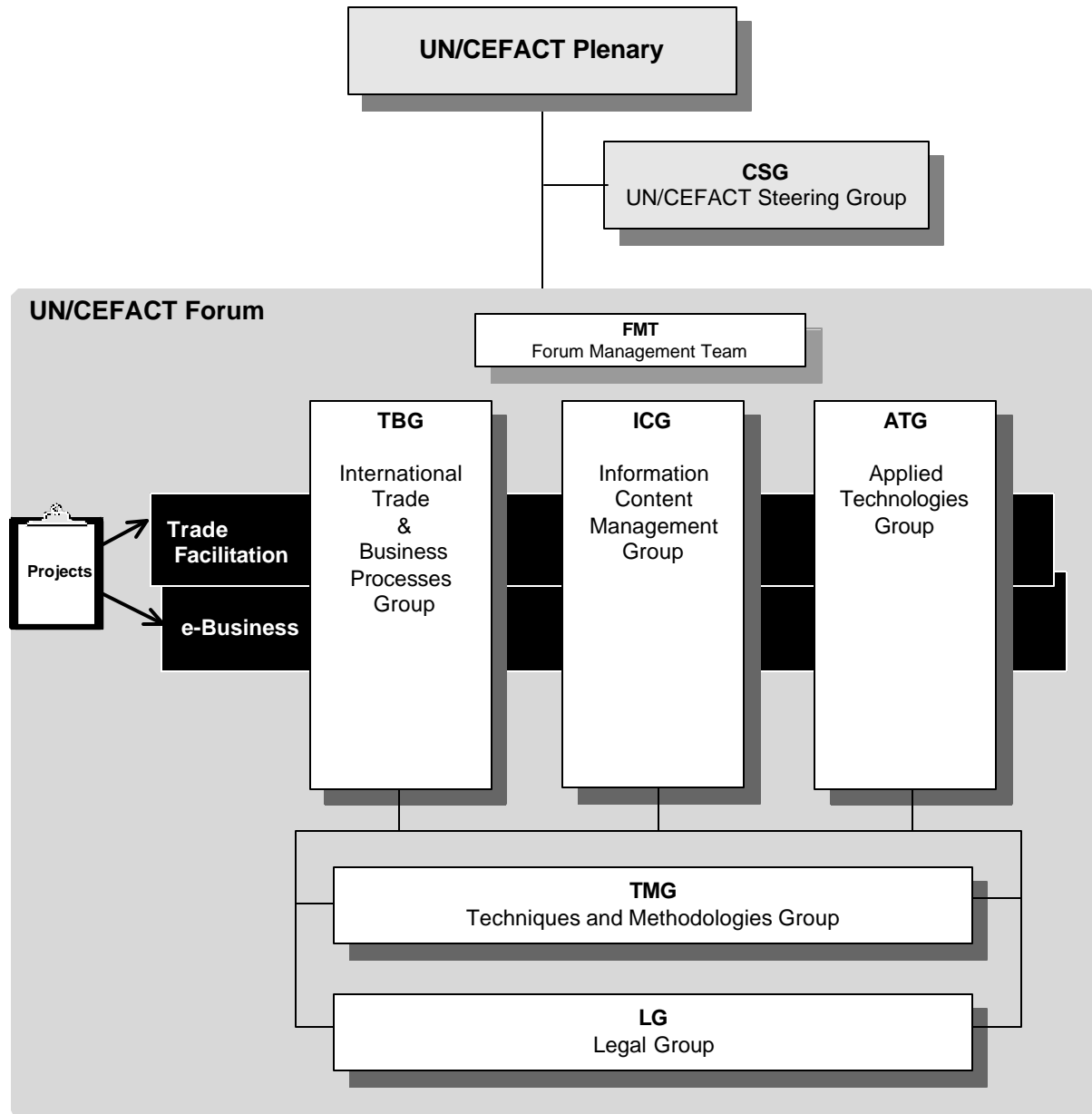


Figure 1



16. The above schematic (figure 1) depicts the proposed overall structure. It encompasses five UN/CEFACT Groups and a management team that will collectively be known as the UN/CEFACT Forum. The TBG, ICG and ATG are new operational Groups with the TMG and LG serving essentially as support Groups. The interactions between the groups are shown in the work flow in figure 2, with the understanding that a diagram can never properly represent the entirety of interactions that will occur between the groups as they progress both trade facilitation and e-Business activities. Therefore, the boxes depicted in figure 1 should not be viewed as silos, but rather as a series of interdependent management units that individually have the responsibility for progressing specific activities.

### **UN/CEFACT Forum**

17. The UN/CEFACT Forum is designed to allow the concurrent meeting of all the Groups at one time in order to facilitate closer liaison and full interaction as a single working body. It is envisaged that such meetings would be convened twice a year, with each individual Group having the option to convene further specific Group meetings at their discretion.

18. Each Group, as an individually empowered UN/CEFACT Group, is free to structure itself internally as it deems necessary to undertake its work. However, it is suggested that each Group either subdivides itself into Working Groups that have one or more Project Teams, or is simply composed of Project Teams. Membership of each Group may be physical or virtual.

19. Each Project Team would consist of experts tasked with completing an approved project within a predetermined timeframe. However, this process should not preclude the establishment of standing project teams where the project itself has an ongoing or recurring function.

20. A Project Team's responsibility may cover work items submitted by any UN/CEFACT member (governmental, non-governmental and international organizations) under the rules of the Open Development Process.

### **Management Team**

21. Overall the operational management of the UN/CEFACT Forum will be achieved by a Forum Management Team (FMT) comprising the Chair and Vice-chair of each of the five Groups. In addition there will be a Forum Chair, who will be elected by the FMT for a period of two years. The Group Chairs shall be ex officio members of the CSG.

22. To ensure that the projects are lead by the appropriate group, any new project proposal would be reviewed and approved by the FMT in accordance with agreed acceptance criteria. Negative response by any member of the FMT must detail the reason for the disapproval. It will then be the responsibility of the full CSG to address any appeals against disapproval in order to come to the final disposition on the proposal.

23. The FMT is expected to conduct regular monthly conference calls to ensure ongoing project management. During these calls the status of each project would be reviewed, including milestone delivery and/or issues and issue resolution steps. This is designed to ensure that the project interdependency as well as planned publication to the user communities are as agreed and forecasted.

### **International Trade & Business Processes Group (TBG)**

24. The International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG) will be responsible for business and governmental process analysis, best practices, and international trade procedures using the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology to support the development of appropriate trade facilitation and electronic business solutions. The TBG would issue, publish and present analyses of existing business and governmental processes and procedures, and reports on constraints to more effective trade processes. This includes publishing trade facilitation Recommendations and guidelines for better business practices within the area of the mandate, and liaisons with other groups and organizations as required.

25. The TBG is the entry point for the workflow and is responsible for analysing the interactive and collaborative roles inherent in performing trade, business and administration activities; defining the trade, business and administration information transaction patterns and flows; and documenting the specific information exchanges that flow between the respective roles, including the specification of the business information models.

26. Projects that would be championed by the TBG would include the specification of Common Business Processes, specification of Reference Models, the specification and development of UN Trade Facilitation Recommendations. The TBG would also act as a focal point for the sharing and the evaluation of existing common business and governmental processes, and for reviewing the business relevance of Data Maintenance Requests.

27. Experts of this Group would primarily be process, procedure and modeling experts in the international trade and e-Business arenas. The Group would combine business domain and information experts to ensure cross-domain harmonization, especially at the industry implementation level.

### **Information Contents Management Group (ICG)**

28. The ICG would be primarily responsible for the management, categorization and normalization of reusable information blocks. This content would be retained in a series of libraries (open repository) detailing the base information structures and components.

29. Activities would include applying common information building blocks across all information models, detailing service protocols and semantics. The content of the libraries would be generated through analysis of existing information blocks as used by various industries today in conjunction with the core component library content. The Group would also be responsible to ensure that the information models undergo normalization to align them with the domain reference models developed by the TBG.

30. The Group would primarily be composed of semantic and information modelling experts in the area of technology neutral and reusable design practices.

31. This Group would be responsible for the reusable process and information blocks contained in the UN/EDIFACT Data Element Directory, all Code Directories, Business Process Catalogue, Business Information Objects Reference Library and Core Components Library.

### **Applied Technologies Group (ATG)**

32. The ATG would be responsible for the creation of the trade, business and administration document structures that would be deployed by a specific technology or standard such as UN/EDIFACT, UN Layout Key, UN e-docs or XML.

33. The activities of the ATG would cover the design and assembly of UN/EDIFACT messages, applying Data Maintenance Requests against the Directories and Libraries, UN Layout Key, UN eDocs, XML Schemas and Document Type Definitions (DTD), and the definition of Core Components.

34. The Group would primarily be composed of technology experts conversant with the various implementation syntaxes, protocols and mechanisms for the packaging of data for exchange.

### **Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG)**

35. The TMG would be responsible for the TMWG work as currently mandated by UN/CEFACT, such as the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology. It would provide support for all UN/CEFACT Groups by providing base (meta) ICT specifications, and education. In addition it would continue to function as an ICT research group to evaluate new techniques and methodologies that may assist UN/CEFACT and its groups to fulfil their mandate and vision in trade facilitation and e-Business.

36. Experts of this Group would have a broad based knowledge of existing techniques and methodologies used within UN/CEFACT, technological developments, and the functions of UN/CEFACT and its groups.

### **Legal Group (LG)**

37. The LG would be responsible for the LWG work as currently mandated by UN/CEFACT. It will support all UN/CEFACT Groups as well as its own projects as defined by the Plenary.

38. The LG would have responsibility for issuing, publishing and presenting analyses of existing legal processes and procedures, reports on constraints to more effective legal processes, and proposals to UN/CEFACT and other organizations, for more effective legal processes and procedures. This includes publishing guidelines for better business practice within the area of the mandate, and liaisons with other groups and organizations as required.

39. Experts of this Group would have the knowledge to address legal issues arising from the work programme of UN/CEFACT.

## **VI. Workflow Approach**

40. By taking a series of workflows that can be followed by various types of experts in business and governmental process analysis, (i.e., business domain expert, business process analyst, technical modeler, message designer) one can organize groups that specialize in their knowledge of these areas and expertise in producing specific deliverables as outlined below.

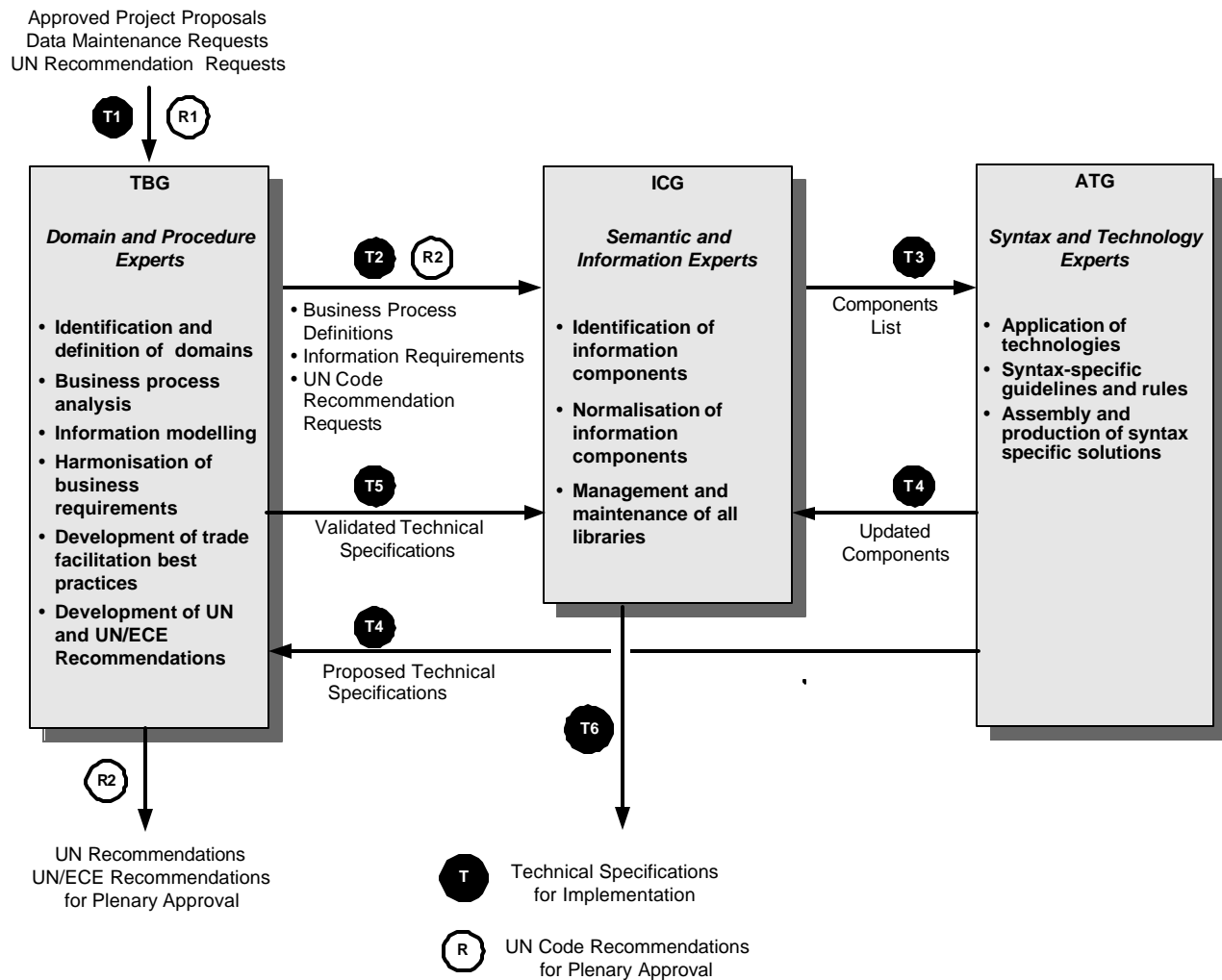


Figure 2

41. The preceding schematic depicts the envisaged workflow performed by the TBG, ICG and ATG. The basis for the conducting this work would be through established projects in accordance with the “Open Development Process for Technical Specifications”.

42. What would happen?

Step 1: A requirement may be for a technical specification, or a UN or UN/ECE Recommendation, or maintenance of existing products. If the requirement is for a technical specification, the TBG will perform the definition modelling and analysis through its business domain experts.

- Step 2: The resulting Business Process Definitions with Information Requirements, or Code Recommendation requests are passed to ICG. Draft UN and UN/ECE Recommendations are prepared by TBG for subsequent Plenary approval.
- Step 3: After review and normalization to look for existing reusable components, and assignment of new components, the ICG either:
- a. Makes component lists available to the ATG (for technical specification requests); or
  - b. Catalogues documents following Plenary approval (for UN Code Recommendations)
- Step 4: The ATG assembles the message/DTD/Schema to produce both proposed specification(s) and updated components.
- Step 5: The TBG validates whether the technical solution meets the business need and releases it to the ICG. In addition ICG receives the final updated components and validated specifications and stores them in the appropriate library for maintenance and future reuse.
- Step 6: Technical Specifications made publicly available or UN Recommendations for UN/CEFACT Plenary approval.

## VII. Migration Plan

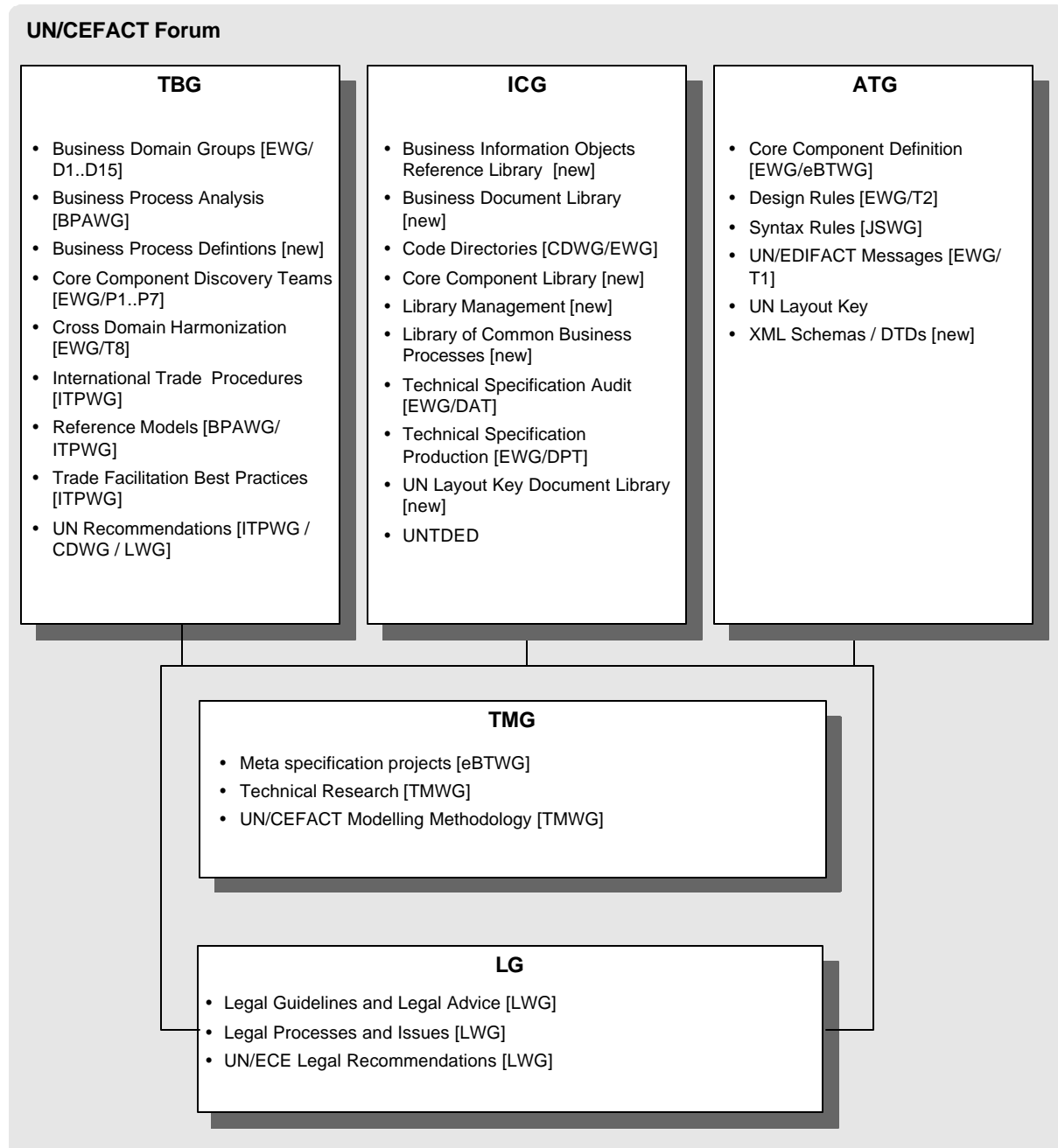


Figure 3

43. The above schematic depicts the envisaged transition from the existing UN/CEFACT Working Group structure to the proposed UN/CEFACT Group structure.

44. The key functions of each new UN/EDIFACT Group are shown with the corresponding existing UN/CEFACT Working Group responsible for the activity indicated in square brackets. Additional details by Project Team can be found in Annex B.

## VIII. The Next Steps

45. The CSG recommends that the structure proposed herein be the genesis of the new UN/CEFACT Forum and that the existing UN/CEFACT Working Groups progressively migrate their activities into the new structure with the target launch of the UN/CEFACT Forum in the third quarter 2002. This would entail, formal approval of its establishment by the UN/CEFACT Plenary scheduled for May 27th 2002 in Geneva.

46. Furthermore, the CSG acknowledges that in order to realize this, all parties concerned must enter into this restructuring process with the spirit of full cooperation and a commitment to see the foundations laid as soon as it is practicable. The CSG is issuing a transition document (UN/CEFACT Transition Plan) detailing the action steps for the current Working Groups. All these Working Groups are expected to complete their required transition steps so as to cease operation in their existing structure no later than the first day of the first UN/CEFACT Forum meeting.

47. The CSG envisages that the following schedule could serve as basis of finalizing the future structure and organization of the UN/CEFACT permanent Working Groups:

| Date   | Activity  |
|--|---|
| March 31 <sup>st</sup> 2002                          | Cut-off date for the submission of written comments by UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegations and UN/CEFACT Working Group Chairs. |
| May 27 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> 2002, Geneva | UN/CEFACT Plenary, decision on proposed structure.  |
| May 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> 2002, Geneva | CSG, preparation for the inaugural UN/CEFACT Forum.   |
| 16-20 <sup>th</sup> September 2002                   | First UN/CEFACT Forum Meeting in Geneva.; Current Working Groups cease operations and the new Groups begin.               |

## Annex A

### Reference Model Framework

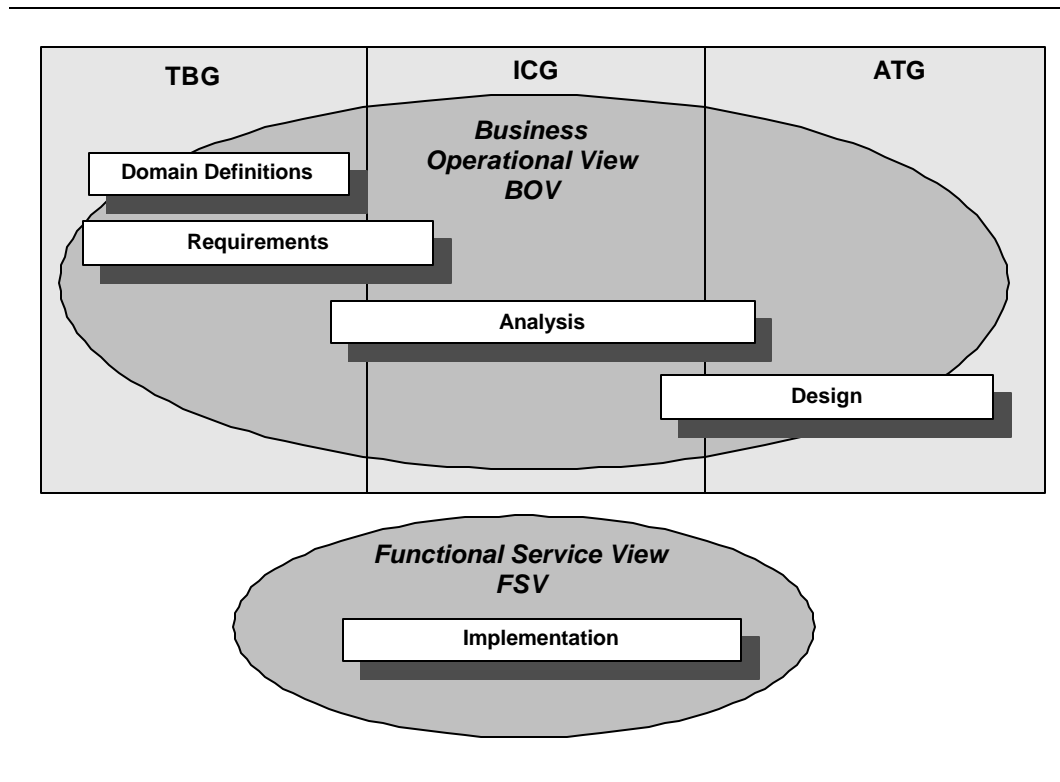


Figure A1

- A1. Key industry thinking has been encapsulated in the restructuring process. In particular, work on establishing business requirements, normalizing and simplifying business processes is separated from the work of producing syntax specific solutions using XML, EDI or other transfer protocol.
- A2. In technical terms, this separation of the “Business Operational View” (BOV) from the “Functional Service View” (FSV) follows the Open-edition Reference Model framework (ISO/IEC 14662). ISO/IEC 14662 defines the BOV as “a perspective of business transactions limited to those aspects regarding the making of business decisions and commitments among organizations, which are needed for the description of a business transaction.” The FSV is “a perspective of business transactions limited to those information technology interoperability aspects of IT systems needed to support the execution of Open-edition transactions.”
- A3. Furthermore, the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology provides an industry recognized methodology and UML profile for specifying an incremental construction of business processes and information models. It has the capability to provide various levels of specification detail (known as granularity) that are suitable for communicating the models variously, and at the correct level of granularity, to business domain experts, business application integrators and network application solution providers. These levels are realized through workflow stages – domain definitions, requirements, analysis, design and implementation workflows- each of which produce deliverables that are used as input to subsequent processes. The specific workflows are outlined in Section VI, Workflow Approach.



## Annex B

### Migration of Current Project Teams

| Project Name  | Current Working Group | Proposed Group |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| Accounting and Auditing Core Components                                 | EWG (P7)              | TBG            |
| Business Collaboration Patterns and Monitored Commitments Specification | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Business Collaboration Protocol Specification                           | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Business Neutral Core Component Library                                 | EWG (P1)              | ICG            |
| Business Entity Library   | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Business Process Information Model Exchange Schema                      | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Business Process Specification Schema                                   | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Common Business Process Catalog Specification                           | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Common Business Process Catalog Definitions                             | EBTWG/BPAWG           | TBG            |
| Core Component Realization Schema                                       | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Core Component Specification  | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Core Components Supplements   | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| e-Business Architecture Specification                                   | eBTWG                 | TMG            |
| Finance Business Process Modelling                                      | EWG (P4)              | TBG            |
| Finance Core Components   | EWG (P3)              | TBG            |
| Harmonization Documentation   | EWG (P2)              | TBG            |
| Insurance Core Components   | EWG (P6)              | TBG            |
| Travel, Tourism and Leisure Core Components                             | EWG (P5)              | TBG            |
| UML to XML Design Rules   | eBTWG                 | ATG            |

## Annex C

### Glossary

The following are terms used throughout this document:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| ATG  | UN/CEFACT Applied Technologies Group   |
| Domain   | A body of experts based upon industry or functional commonality in order to pursue joint interests. Examples could be purchasing, insurance, transport, etc.   |
| e-Business   | The application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to transform government and business processes, improve productivity and increase efficiencies by standard methods of exchanging electronic information to meet the needs of industry, governments, and service providers.   |
| eBTWGUN/CEFACT e-Business Transitional Working Group |  |
| FMT  | UN/CEFACT Forum Management Team  |
| Group  | <p>One of the five entities that constitute the UN/CEFACT Forum as defined by this document. These are TBG, ICG, ATG, TMG, and LG. These Groups may be further subdivided depending on workload, into Project Teams, or if so warranted due to multiple mutual interests, as Working Groups of multiple Project Teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples may be a Transport Working Group within the TBG addressing several Project Teams such as Bills of Lading, Ship Planning, Container Movements, etc.</li> <li>• Other Project Teams may share items that cross Work Groups such as the Invoice, which covers purchasing, transport, finance and customs.</li> </ul> |
| ICG  | UN/CEFACT Information Content Management Group   |
| ICT  | Information and Communications Technology  |
| LG   | UN/CEFACT Legal Group  |
| TBG  | UN/CEFACT International Trade and Business Processes Group   |
| TMG  | UN/CEFACT Techniques and Methodologies Group   |
| Trade Facilitation                                   | <p>The development of a consistent, transparent and predictable environment for international trade transactions. It is based on simplification of formalities and procedures; standardization and improvement of physical infrastructure and facilities; and harmonization of applicable laws and regulations. The primary goal is to reduce transaction cost and complexity for businesses and to improve the trading environment in a country, while optimizing efficient and effective government control.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>   |