



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/17  
18 September 2009

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON TRADE**

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Fifteenth session  
Geneva, 9-12 November 2009  
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

**UN/CEFACT Programme of Work: 2010 – 2011 (Revised)**

Note by the Bureau<sup>1</sup>

*Summary*

This document presents a revision to the programme of work for 2010 and 2011 of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), originally approved at the fourteenth Plenary session, in 2008.

It updates the priorities and the related work plan, highlighting key deliverables. It also includes work items arising from the recommendations of the UNECE Executive Committee and work items arising from recent developments and requirements in trade facilitation.

The Plan is presented in two parts. The first presents an overview of the UN/CEFACT vision, mission, core activities and deliverables for 2010 – 2011; the second provides a more detailed description of the work plan.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was submitted late for document processing as clearances from relevant parties were received late.

## **PART ONE**

### **UN/CEFACT PROGRAMME OF WORK 2010 - 2011**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The work of UN/CEFACT reflects many decades of efforts to simplify international trade procedures, particularly to enhance the efficient exchange of goods across international borders.<sup>2</sup>

2. Working from a Plenary-approved integrated strategy<sup>3</sup>, UN/CEFACT principal activities involve the nuts and bolts of international trade, focusing on simplifying, harmonizing and standardizing the flow of information that facilitates these processes. One of the essential challenges it addresses is the reality that goods cannot move faster than the processes and information that accompanies them.

3. In trying to simplify these procedures and information flows, UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations aim to ease the way across the wide range of intermediary steps associated with moving goods through international supply chains, covering business processes and procedures that include, for example, commercial, transport, regulatory and payments domains. In particular, the following are some of the well-known UN/CEFACT instruments:

- (a) United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents (Recommendation 1), the international standard for the layout and content of trade documents;
- (b) UN/EDIFACT, the international standard for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport;
- (c) Recommendations for the codification of trade information ;
- (d) The Single Window Recommendation (Recommendation 33);
- (e) The Core Component Library (CCL).

4. New challenges have also emerged for companies operating in international trade. They include the requests for advance information imposed by security authorities, and the increasing complexity and geographic extension of international supply chains. Meeting these challenges requires taking advantage of information and communication technology, and UN/CEFACT recommendations and standards provide a coherent set of trade facilitation instruments for use in “off-the-shelf” as well as customized business software solutions. They thereby provide a range of possible efficiency gains, encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises, and transition and developing economies to engage more effectively in international trade. They are also of direct relevance for new initiatives of Governments in areas such as e-government and online taxation.

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<sup>2</sup> TRADE/R.650, Mandate and Terms of Reference of UN/CEFACT, 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.

<sup>3</sup> ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/5. The integrated strategy is the starting point for much that is covered in this revised programme of work; and it will also be reviewed shortly with respect to topics where possible revision may be timely.

## **II. UN/CEFACT VISION, MISSION AND CORE ACTIVITIES**

5. The vision of UN/CEFACT is simple, transparent and effective processes for global business. More than 300 experts from all five continents work together in business domain, governmental and technical working groups throughout the year, mainly through electronic communication (e.g., emails and teleconferencing). Most importantly, there is an opportunity for all the groups to meet together twice yearly at the UN/CEFACT forums, which are held at different locations throughout the world<sup>4</sup>.

6. Supported by the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the work of UN/CEFACT is undertaken within the following framework:

### **A. Mission**

7. To improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transitional economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively, and so contribute to the growth of the global economy.

### **B. Core objective**

8. The simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and associated information flows for national and international trade-related transactions and, in addition, non-trade related areas that seek the benefit of UN/CEFACT standards, recommendations, methodologies and best practice.

### **C. Core values**

9. To develop standards in an open, transparent and equitable environment based on United Nations principles, rules and regulations, and in response to the expressed needs of both the public and private sectors of the Member States of the United Nations. To undertake such work with the highest level of integrity, courtesy and respect for individual opinion and cultural diversity.

### **D. Key activity areas**

10. In order to achieve this mission, UN/CEFACT undertakes activities in the following broad areas, in response to the needs of countries and international business:

- (a) Identification and analysis of opportunities to simplify, harmonize, and standardize international trade processes, procedures and information flows within and between countries;
- (b) Development and maintenance of recommendations, standards and instruments in support of international trade facilitation, in response to the needs of countries and other stakeholders in international business;

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<sup>4</sup> See list of UN/CEFACT Forums at [http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf\\_forums/index.htm](http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf_forums/index.htm).

- (c) Outreach to support capacity building to foster implementation of UN/CEFACT recommendations, standards and instruments worldwide, with a special focus on transition and developing countries;
- (d) Collaboration with other key players involved in trade facilitation activities<sup>5</sup> and organizations involved in standards development<sup>6</sup>, with a view to avoiding duplication of work and to building together an internationally consistent framework.

11. UN/CEFACT's work supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 8 to "develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory and includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally".

### III. PRIORITY DELIVERABLES

12. The period 2010 – 2011 promises to be very productive for UN/CEFACT. Many key envisaged standards and recommendations and tools should continue to advance well and be finalized over the period. Further, a growing user base is emerging with regard to standards such as the Core Component Library and the development of related XML (Extensible Markup Language) schemas covering trade and business processes.

13. We also expect a significant increase in the use of existing UN/CEFACT standards by Governments and the private sector. For example, the continued enhancement and refinement of the Core Component Library (CCL), combined with the availability of the relevant user guides mentioned above, will greatly simplify the direct application of these standards.

14. Continued strong developments in the Single Window area should see a further enhancement of the use of UN/CEFACT standards in efforts such as data harmonisation and data modelling. The overall movement towards Single Window is a strong catalyst for the broader implementation of the entire suite of trade facilitation instruments and constitutes a major opportunity for countries, especially developing and transition economies, to move forward in the trade facilitation area. UN/CEFACT plans to add to the existing Recommendations 33 and 35 by completing and publishing Recommendation 34 on Data Simplification & Standardisation, the continued development of the Single Window Repository, and by organizing an international symposium on Single Window and Cross Border Data Exchange in collaboration with Member States and other stakeholders, including international organizations that are active and interested in furthering developments in this area.

15. UN/CEFACT also looks forward to the eventual completion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Development Round and, in particular, steps forward involving WTO

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the Global Facilitation Partnership, which involve the following Core Partners: UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Economic Commission For Europe (UNECE), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Bank, World Customs Organisation (WCO); and UN Regional Commissions.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on e-Business (ISO, IEC, ITU and UNECE), OASIS, SWIFT, ACORD, IATA.

negotiations on Trade Facilitation, with the prospect that UN/CEFACT instruments could play a major role in helping countries to implement and benefit from the final agreed set of measures. To this end, UN/CEFACT will continue to work closely with members of the Global Facilitation Partnership and other relevant organizations in the standards-development domain to ensure a harmonized and consistent approach to trade facilitation work.

16. Another major priority over the period will be to enhance the implementation of UN/CEFACT instruments in countries with economies in transition, and also the participation of experts from these countries in the work of UN/CEFACT. In this area, the competency of UN/CEFACT experts will provide guidance to the development of capacity-building materials, which will be used in various outreach efforts by the UNECE secretariat and other relevant organizations, in consultation with UN/CEFACT, with a view to strengthening early stages of trade facilitation implementation.

17. UN/CEFACT also looks forward to enhanced cooperation with the European Union and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in ensuring broad-based implementation of UN/CEFACT standards globally, as this is a key requirement and demand of international business as well as Governments.

#### **IV. RESOURCE ISSUES**

18. At the same time as envisaged activities are going forward, UN/CEFACT continues to face resource challenges in certain areas, in particular, to ensure that sufficient national experts and necessary infrastructure are adequately made available to support the full implementation of the programme of work. As countries are more and more likely to look to UN/CEFACT for speedy solutions to specific problems, member States and other stakeholders can be expected to be invited to also collaborate closely and more actively with elected officials and the secretariat with a view to bridging critical gaps.

19. Special efforts will therefore be made over the period to identify priority areas and to ensure that there is close monitoring of targets, fostering a positive and realistic management of expectations. In particular, steps will be taken to consider ways to facilitate support from recognized national experts or to help fund a pool of delegation-nominated experts from whom needed competencies can be drawn. In some cases, in order to address specific project proposals, this may involve direct support from member States or through a United Nations Trust Fund.

20. The UN/CEFACT Bureau and the secretariat will work to further define roles and responsibilities to ensure the maximum efficiency in resource utilization.

#### **V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

21. The above priorities were developed in response to the requirements of member States and other stakeholders, working collaboratively to foster a framework that should achieve desired deliverables.

## **PART TWO**

### **DETAILED WORK PLAN**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

22. The following are the detailed activities that will be undertaken over the period under the four major subject categories below.

- (a) Identification and analysis of opportunities to simplify, harmonize, and standardize international trade processes, procedures and information flows within and between countries;
- (b) Development and maintenance of recommendations, standards and instruments in support of international trade facilitation, in response to the needs of countries and other stakeholders in international business;
- (c) Outreach to support capacity-building to foster implementation of UN/CEFACT recommendations, standards and instruments worldwide, with a special focus on transition and developing countries;
- (d) Collaboration with other key players involved in trade facilitation activities and organisations involved in standards development, with the view of avoiding duplication of work and to building together an internationally consistent framework.

#### **KEY ACTIVITY AREA 1**

##### **IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SIMPLIFY, HARMONIZE, AND STANDARDIZE INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROCESSES, PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION FLOWS WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES**

###### **Activity 1.1                      Identify trade facilitation needs and priorities**

Description:                      For each trade and business process sector, identify trade facilitation needs and priorities of countries and business and then develop suitable instruments to address them.

###### **Activities/Outputs:**

- 1.1.1.                      Identification and prioritization of country and business trade facilitation needs in collaboration with key stakeholders;
- 1.1.2.                      Identification of specific requirements of countries with economies in transition.

Target audience:                      Countries, businesses and international organizations.

**Activity 1.2: Documentation and analysis of key elements of international processes, procedures and transactions for each trade and business domain**

Description: For each trade and business process sector, capture and document business and trade facilitation process requirements in a format where they can be analysed.

**Activities/Outputs:**

- 1.2.1 Publication of an integrated and detailed process and data model of the international supply chain based on the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) and the Core Component Library; this process model will guide the framework for the domain-specific activities of the UN/CEFACT Forum to achieve harmonization and facilitation of the business processes;
- 1.2.2 Development of recommendations to countries and the private sector on the use of UN/CEFACT business processes and data modelling to facilitate international trade;
- 1.2.3 Development of an overarching recommendation (like Recommendation 1 for paper trade documents) that explains to countries and business how the UN/CEFACT business process approach and its instruments (in particular UMM and Core Component Library) benefit trade facilitation, and how countries and business should use these tools;
- 1.2.4 Report on the impact of UN/CEFACT instruments implemented by countries and businesses.

Target audience: Countries, the private sector and international organizations.

**Activity 1.3: Monitor technological and methodological developments**

Description: Research and evaluate information and communication technologies and techniques, and develop standards and methodologies to assist UN/CEFACT to fulfill its mission.

**Activities/Outputs:**

- 1.3.1 Develop a list of requirements for technical instruments that meet the needs of its business domain groups (TBGs) and that will drive the work of the technical groups. The latter will evaluate how to best respond to these needs based on their value for business domain groups and, when required, develop new instruments.

Target audience: UN/CEFACT Plenary and Forum Management Group (FMG)

## **KEY ACTIVITY AREA 2**

### **DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF RECOMMENDATIONS, STANDARDS AND INSTRUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION, IN RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF COUNTRIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

#### **Activities/Outputs:**

#### **2.1 Develop**

- 2.1.1 Develop new standards and recommendations in response to the needs of member States and the business community<sup>7</sup>. There are over 60 projects currently under development – see UN/CEFACT Project Website at <http://www.unece.org/cefact/>;
- 2.1.2 Encourage the participation of countries with economies in transition in the standards development process.

#### **2.2 Maintain**

- 2.2.1 Regular ongoing maintenance, publication and translation into French and Russian of UN/CEFACT standards, recommendations and codes, such as UN/LOCODE, UN/EDIFACT, codes and CCL;
- 2.2.2 Publication of an efficient, documented and managed production process for regular ongoing development and maintenance (e.g., UN/LOCODE, UN/EDIFACT, codes, CCL);
- 2.2.3 Publication of a well documented Audit Methodology for UN/CEFACT standards.

#### **2.3 Tools**

- 2.3.1 Development and implementation of an online standards registry; build on the Technical Specifications developed under the Programme of Work 2008-2009 to advance availability of this central registry to foster the development, publication and access to UN/CEFACT instruments and the extent of their evolving use around the world;
- 2.3.2 Development of specifications for tools that can support Core Component Library maintenance and business process and data modelling, with the goal of fostering implementation of such tools. In particular, UN/CEFACT will look into the possibilities offered through open source and

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<sup>7</sup> All new UN/CEFACT projects must have support from a minimum of three countries.



- commercial market solutions, especially when they can be encouraged to be provided on a freely available basis.
- 2.3.3 Report on the usability and future value of syntax-neutral solutions to support the work of the business domain groups and trade facilitation implementation (e.g., UN/EDIFACT, XML);
  - 2.3.4 Development of a Guide to CCL implementation;
  - 2.3.5 Development of the Guide to Data Harmonization using CCL;
  - 2.3.6 Development of the Guide to Trade Facilitation Implementation;
  - 2.3.7 Development of High Level Implementation Packages to assist in the understanding of the requirements for implementation of specific standards and recommendations;
  - 2.3.8 Development of Technical Implementation Packages to assist in the technical implementation of specific standards and recommendations.

### **KEY ACTIVITY AREA 3**

#### **OUTREACH TO SUPPORT CAPACITY BUILDING TO FOSTER IMPLEMENTATION OF UN/CEFACT RECOMMENDATIONS, STANDARDS AND INSTRUMENTS WORLDWIDE, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON TRANSITION AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

##### **Activity 3.1: Capacity-building**

Description: Take steps to build awareness about UN/CEFACT and encourage efforts to make available trade facilitation and e-business knowledge, responding to requirements of member States and other stakeholders, with particular attention to engaging countries with economies in transition and developing countries.

##### **Activities/Outputs:**

- 3.1.1 Development and publication of a strategy and roadmap for capacity-building to meet the needs of member States and other stakeholders, relying on close collaboration with them and with international organisations working in this field, to formulate realistic targets and deliverables, with special attention to the needs of countries with economies in transition and developing countries;
- 3.1.2 Development of High-level managerial capacity building packages targeted at decision makers in government and business;
- 3.1.3 Development, publication of technical capacity building packages targeted at technical and trade facilitation experts, ensuring translation into French and Russian;

- 3.1.4 Completion of the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide and a series of country/regional workshops based on the Guide;
- 3.1.5 Maintain and revise the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide in response to feedback from countries and changing trade facilitation needs;
- 3.1.6 Report on implementations by member States and other stakeholders of UN/CEFACT standards and instruments;
- 3.1.7 Report on collaboration with the Regional Advisor concerning efforts to implement UN/CEFACT standards and instruments;
- 3.1.8 Foster the development of an online standards showcase, in collaboration with more complex and complete efforts associated with developing the online standards registry, as a key tool to support capacity-building, by helping to easily demonstrate UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations and opportunities for their use.

Target audience: Countries, in particular countries with economies in transition and least-developed countries

### **Activity 3.2: Promotion**

Description: To develop promotional material and enhance the UN/CEFACT website.

#### **Activities/Outputs:**

- 3.2.1 Development of a communications strategy and a roadmap, with priority to strengthening use of the UN/CEFACT website for information dissemination, with the close collaboration of the secretariat, member States and other stakeholders;
- 3.2.2 Documents explaining the use of UN/CEFACT instruments that are relevant to the member States and other stakeholders, including supporting materials to foster work programmes of WTO, WCO and the World Bank;
- 3.2.3 Guidelines for UN/CEFACT experts on roles, responsibilities and code of conduct;
- 3.2.1 Seek funds to translate UN/CEFACT documents into all 3 official languages (English, French and Russian).

Target audience: Countries and international organizations, UN/CEFACT Plenary

## KEY ACTIVITY AREA 4

### COLLABORATION WITH OTHER KEY PLAYERS INVOLVED IN TRADE FACILITATION ACTIVITIES<sup>8</sup> AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT<sup>9</sup>, WITH THE VIEW OF AVOIDING DUPLICATION OF WORK AND TO BUILDING TOGETHER AN INTERNATIONALLY CONSISTENT FRAMEWORK

**Activity 4.1: Liaise with other standard setting organisations and agencies**

Description: To enhance awareness of its work, cooperate with national and international organizations active in trade facilitation, standards development organizations, and regional and sub-regional country groupings.

**Activities/Outputs:**

- 4.1.1 Identify and monitor the work of other organizations that are relevant to UN/CEFACT work, and, where appropriate, cooperate with such organizations to avoid the duplication of effort and to generate synergies (e.g., with the European Union in the area of e-procurement);
- 4.1.2 Review permanent group collaboration activities with other standards setting organisations, with a view to ensure a coherent approach to such activities and to foster common global standards;
- 4.1.3 Identify core partners/agencies that are vital to the delivery of UN/CEFACT instruments and define, review, and agree upon a division of labour and respective roles and responsibilities; develop a mechanism for effective cooperation and delivery;
- 4.1.4 Through close collaboration of the Bureau, the secretariat and the Regional Adviser on Trade Facilitation, prepare a report to the UN/CEFACT Plenary on existing and potential synergies, with relevant organizations in countries with economies in transition;
- 4.1.5 Use the UNECE Multiplier Point network to disseminate information on UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations.

**Target audience:** Countries and other standards-development organizations

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the Global Facilitation Partnership, which involve the following Core Partners: UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Economic Commission For Europe (UNECE), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Bank, World Customs Organisation (WCO); and UN Regional Commissions.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on e-Business (ISO, IEC, ITU and UNECE) as well as OASIS, SWIFT, ACORD, IATA and CEN.

**Activity 4.2: Cross-border transactions**

Description: To promote the development of information and documentary standards to support the advance presentation of cargo information. Steps should be taken to explore the needs and requirements of industry and countries for standards related to supply chain security management.

**Activities/Outputs:**

4.2.1 Report on the cooperation with WCO and the implementation of UN/CEFACT and other standards for cross-border trade and, in particular, their value for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), transition and least developed economies. Ensure that the standards are of practical use for SMEs, transition economies and developing countries.

Target audience: Countries, World Customs Organization, regional commissions of the United Nations, international organizations, and trade, transport and supply-chain-related stakeholder groups.

**Activity 4.3: Work closely with the UNECE Committee on Trade and other parts of the UNECE**

Description: To identify areas of work under the UNECE Committee on Trade and other UNECE units that could be used to reinforce trade facilitation, such as regulatory convergence and the analysis of regional trade agreements and technical barriers to trade.

**Activities/Outputs:**

4.3.1 Report to the UNECE Committee on Trade and the UN/CEFACT Plenary on joint activities undertaken by the UN/CEFACT Permanent Groups with expert groups of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and other areas of UNECE.

Target audience: Countries, regional commissions of the United Nations, UNECE Committee on Trade, UNECE Inland Transport Committee

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