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CEFACT

Report from the UN/EDIFACT Working Group

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1. EWG Meeting - Miami - 30/4 - 1/5/98

The Edifact Working Group (EWG) held its first session in Miami, USA from 30 April to 1 May 1998 following the final Joint Rapporteurs Team meeting.

2. PARTICIPANTS

229 participants in the Miami meeting included representatives from the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America.

3. ELECTIONS

Chair/Vice Chair

As the final action of the JRT meeting elections were conducted by the CEFACT Steering Group to elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the EWG. Mr. Barry Keogh (Australia) was elected Chair of the UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG). Mr. Pierre Georget (France) was elected Vice Chair of the UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG).

4. Steering Committee

Sub-Working Groups conducted elections to determine the members of the Steering Committee who were identified as follows:

EWG Chair		Barry Keogh
EWG Vice Chair		Pierre Georget
JM1	Materials Management	Irvin Chmielewski, Chair
JM2	Purchasing	Mounir El Khoury, Chair
JM3	Product & Quality Data	Philippe de Ramiro, Chair
JM4	Transport	Dominique Vankemmel, Chair
JM5	Customs	Karen Henderson, Chair
JM6	Finance	Renato Polo, Chair
JM7	Architecture, Engineering	Bernard Longhi, Chair
JM8	Statistics	Chris Nelson, Chair
JM9	Insurance	John Kemble, Chair
JM10	Travel, Tourism & Leisure	Jana Jobe, Chair
JM11	Healthcare	Stig Korsgaard, Chair
JM12	Social Security, Employment and	Rein During, Chair
JM13	Directory Support Services	James Olivi, Chair
JM14	Accounting, Auditing, Registration and Financial Information Services	Robert Lemense, Chair
G2	Promotional Advisory Team	Helge Schoener, Chair
G5	Secretariats	Gaile Spadin, Chair
T1	Joint Technical Assessment Group (JTAG)	Harry Featherstone, Chair
T3	Interactive EDI (I-EDI)	Markus Stirnemann, Chair
T4	Security Joint Working Group	Terry Dosdale, Chair

T7	EDI Associated Objects (EAO)	Anders Grangard, Chair
T8	Implementation Harmonisation	Sue Probert, Chair
MOP	Mandate, Organisation and Procedures	Peter Wilson, Chair
DPT	Directory Production Team	Michael Conroy, Chair
DAT	Directory Audit Team	Francois Vuilleumier, Chair
JSWG	Joint Syntax Working Group	Don Trafford, Chair
MDRG	Message Design Rules Group	Steve Luster, Chair
	UN Secretariat	Virginia Cram-Martos

In addition to the above, there were four ex-officio members nominated and elected to the Steering Committee representing the four approved Entry Points. They were:-

Ms Christina Wallen-Rahlen-	- EBES
Mr Klaus Dieter-Naujok	- ASC X12
Mr Kenji Itoh	- JASTPRO
Mr David Dobbing	- Tradegate ECA

5. Management Team

Elections were held for the Management Team which resulted in the following persons being elected from the Steering Committee:-

Mr. Irvin Chmielewski
 Mr. John Kemble
 Mr. Mounir El Khoury
 Mr. Harry Featherstone

plus the four above mentioned nominees from the Entry Points and the Chair and Vice Chair of the EWG.

6. Acknowledgment of EDIFACT Steering Group and CSG

Mr. Barry Keogh, EWG Chair, recognised and thanked the preceding Rapporteurs, the Chair of the CEFACT Steering Group, and the CEFACT Steering Group Champions for their hard work in previous years in stabilising the JRT and in their efforts to establish the EWG.

7. Groups in Attendance

The following Sub Working Groups met during this session:

JM1	Materials Management
JM2	Purchasing
JM3	Product & Quality Data
JM4	Transport
JM5	Customs
JM6	Finance
JM7	Architecture, Engineering & Construction
JM8	Statistics
JM9	Insurance
JM10	Travel, Tourism & Leisure
JM11	Healthcare

JM12	Social Security, Employment and Education
JM13	Directory Support Services
JM14	Accounting, Auditing, Registration and Financial Information Services
G2	Promotional Advisory Team
G5	Secretariats
T1	JTAG
T3	I-EDI
T4	Security Joint Working Group
T7	EDI Associated Objects (EAO)
T8	Implementation Harmonisation Group
MOP	Mandate, Organisation and Procedures
DPT	Directory Production Team
DAT	Directory Audit Team

8. Data Maintenance Requests (DMR's) and Technical Assessment Activity

DMR review statistics for the meeting were:-

Approved by all regions	280
Approved by JTAG/TASWG	198
Modified	273
Pending to next TASWG	12
Rejected	26
Withdrawn	26
Total	815

The UN Secretariat reported that all DMR'S referred to the UN for inclusion in the Directory D98A were applied. All other codes processed during the preceding JRT meeting and forwarded to the Codes Working Group had been received and were being processed. However one code requesting an addition to Recommendation 20 was rejected by the maintenance agency.

The Australian delegation provided all TAG members with a copy of an application designed to track the status of all DMR's reviewed during the meeting. This application permitted the first ever automated processing of all DMR'S reviewed by JTAG and resulted in the creation of an electronic version of all DMR's. Design Groups were no longer required to submit marked-up versions of paper DMR's.

The EWG noted a dramatic improvement in the overall assessment process and the quality of the deliverable's provided to the UN, Directory Production Team and the Directory Audit Team.

In preparation for future technical assessment activities JTAG published Version 6.0 of the Technical Assessment Checklist (TAC) which accommodated the adoption of the methodology to implement Version 4 of the Message Design Rules (MDR's). In addition JTAG established the Message Design Rules Assistance Group (MADRAS) from members of both the old and new MDR Group (MDRG) and International Harmonisation Group (T8) to assist design groups in implementing the new MDR's.

JTAG announced the ESG decision to publish "The Message and Code Handbook" (MACH) , an informational document providing guidance and recommendations to developers related to good design practices and naming conventions.

9. Messages

Eight new United Nations Standard Messages (UNSM's) were approved for inclusion in the D.98B Directory release:-

BMISRM	Bulk Marine Inspection Summary Report
DMRDEF	Data Maintenance Request Definition
DMSTAT	Data Maintenance Status Report/Query
IMPDEF	EDI Implementation guide definition
IPPOMO	Motor Insurance Policy
LRECLM	Life Reinsurance Claims
PROTAP	Project Tasks Planning
STLRPT	Settlement Transaction Reporting

In addition changes were approved to the DIRDEF (Directory Definition) message to align it with the "UN/EDIFACT Rules for Presentation of Standardised Message and Directories Documentation", document TRADE/WP.4/R 1023.

10. D98.B directory

The Steering Committee and Plenary supported the publishing of D.98B. After the Miami EWG session, the Directory Production Team (DPT) produced the new directory, and the Directory Audit Team (DAT) gave its report including a clean audit statement .

EWG requested CEFACT to approve the publication of the new D98.B directory.

11. Implementation date for commencement of Modelling

The EWG agreed that the proposed implementation date will be "No later than March 31, 2001" to allow adequate time for material development and training necessary to standardise the method. This time frame allows the possibility of four training sessions, and the training material will be distilled on the web. Currently, there is no mention of modelling in the EWG mandate; therefore, the mandate may have to be revised.

12. Terms of reference

The UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) Terms of Reference document was approved.

13. Procedures

The UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) Draft Procedures were modified to include the following regarding elections: "Notification of the date and time of the election shall be published at least 30 days before the election takes place." The members of EWG also agreed that consideration must be given for an additional clause to address emergency situations.

The UN/EDIFACT Working Group Procedures should be approved during the Brussels EWG.

14. Single International Technical Assessment Group

The Technical Assessment Sub Working Group (TASWG) desired to dramatically enhance existing procedures and improve support to the user community by shortening the time frame for DMR reviews to potentially a 4 month submission-to-approval cycle, improving the overall clarity and quality of DMRs, ensuring the technical continuity of EDI standards, supporting user requirements, and facilitating the electronic exchange of DMRs during the review process. To this end TASWG proposed the creation of a single international TAG which would replace the concept of regional DMR reviews. The TASWG would be formally composed of both technical experts and representatives from each message development SWG. The TASWG would then meet midway between each EWG meeting. Operating procedures are in development and will be reviewed at the September 1998 EWG meeting. If approved, the first meeting of the new body is tentatively scheduled for January 1999.

15. Progress on DMR Automation

The EWG goal is to enable the ability to convey automated DMRs among all entry points and the central secretariat at the earliest possible opportunity. The two messages, Data Maintenance Request Definition Message (DMRDEF) and Data Maintenance Status Report/Query Message (DMSTAT), messages were approved for UNSM status at the Miami EWG meeting. The US and AZ representatives have led the development efforts for the Message Implementation Guides with active participation and coordination with EBES and UN representatives. Final guidelines are scheduled for distribution to all Entry Points and the UN prior to the Brussels EWG. We will be assessing the automation progress for all organizations at that time. No finite implementation date has been confirmed as yet, but our desired objective is early 1999 to coincide with the single international TAG capability.

16. Message Design Rule Implementation Training

A decision was taken at the Miami EWG meeting to implement the recently approved Message Design Rules (Version 4) which are based on Version 3 of the ISO 9735 syntax using what is referred to as "Option 2". This option provided a reasonable degree of flexibility and stability in implementing the MDRs, while ensuring that a systematic methodology was put in place to purge structures which no longer comply with the new MDRs. Nevertheless, the implementation process represents a major deviation from past design practices. As a aide to the user community in understanding the implications the revised procedures could have on standards design, TASWG has developed a 3.5 - 4 hour training session to cover the revised procedures. The session will be given over two days to all interested meeting participants at the Brussels EWG meeting.

17. EWG Workplan

The consolidated workplan of the EDIFACT Working Group was compiled by Mr Peter Wilson (Chair of Mandate , Organisation and Procedures Group) and submitted to the CEFACT Steering Group in June 1998.

18. UN/EDIFACT Directories in DIRDEF Format

The task of publishing the UN/EDIFACT Directories formatted as a DIRDEF (Directory Definition) message has been progressed and is at an advanced state of completion. A Message Implementation Guideline (MIG) incorporating the latest enhancements to the DIRDEF message specification has been completed, subject to final checks based on the D.98B Directory in DIRDEF format. The latter is awaiting completion of the D.98B production and audit process. A draft of the MIG and the D.98B Directory in DIRDEF format is to be distributed for general review and comment at the conclusion of the process.

19. UN/EDIFACT Directory Publication and Presentation

A small task group has been examining options for making the UN/EDIFACT Directories and UN/CEFACT Recommendations available in a packaged format on for example, CD ROM for use with popular browser technology. This approach is being considered to complement the existing ASCII formatted diskettes and to make the UN/CEFACT/EDIFACT products and information more accessible and better packaged through a single, user friendly information source.

20. Resolutions proposed by EWG Sub Working Group and Accepted by Steering Group and Plenary.

At the final plenary session resolutions from the Sub-working Groups and Technical Groups were tabled by the respective Chairmen.

Of the 20 resolutions tabled, 3 failed, 9 were noted for information and 8 were accepted as of interest to the EWG members generally. Of the 8 accepted resolutions, 3 were considered necessary actions on the Management Team before the Brussels meeting.

21. EWG Meetings

It was agreed that having EWG meetings less than 6 months was disruptive to the maintenance process and, therefore, it was agreed to try to keep the meetings in March and September of each year. It is anticipated that at least one interim meeting of the Management Team may be held in between the EWG meetings; however, most of the work will be done electronically.

September 1998 EWG Venue

This meeting will be held in Brussels from 7-11 September.

The Vice Chair (Mr P. Georget) was requested to take the lead for organisation of the Brussels EWG.

March 1999 EWG Meeting Venue

The US Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12 has agreed to host the Spring 1999 EWG meeting. The meeting dates have been set at March 22 - 26, 1999, and the meeting venue will be the Renaissance Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. Work is in process to finalize all arrangements with the hotel, and it is anticipated that all meeting requirements will be handled without difficulty. The organisers expect to be able to make the appropriate announcements and provide at least preliminary meeting information at the Brussels EWG meeting.

September 1999 EWG Venue

The Chairman (B. Keogh) advised that he would investigate whether Tradegate ECA might be able to offer to host the September 1999 meeting in Australia. Progress has been made and an announcement is expected at the Brussels EWG.

23. Organisation of EWG

The newly formed organisation has worked effectively since it's first meeting in Miami in May. It is not yet at peak efficiency as the executive and members come to terms with their obligations and learn to work with one another and relate via the electronic mail network. The co-operation and sense of fairness and reason which have been evident in recent months will ensure that the new administration will serve the organisation well and will work diligently to produce the deliverable's required.
