



***Sixteenth regional capacity-building seminar on trade facilitation and data sharing,
back-to-back with the session of the UNECE-ECO coordination committee on Trans-
Caspian corridors***

**DIGITALIZATION OF MULTIMODAL DATA AND DOCUMENT
EXCHANGE IN THE TRANS-CASPIAN CORRIDOR USING UNITED
NATIONS STANDARDS AND REFERENCE DATA MODELS**

Regional capacity-building seminar, Tbilisi, Georgia, 7-8 October 2024

Zoom link will be provided for online participants for 7 October only

To participate in this seminar, in-person and online participants, please register [here](#).

Zoom connection 7 October only: <https://tep-ge.zoom.us/j/87811987984>

Meeting ID: 878 1198 7984

Passcode: 12345

Venue for in person participation: **Pullman Tbilisi Axis Towers** Hotel, Tbilisi, 37 M,
Chavchavadze Avenue, 0179 Tbilisi – Georgia

Please find the web page of the seminar: [here](#)

1. This event is organized in collaboration between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Ministry of Economy of Georgia, the Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia (PS IGC TRACECA) and other partners as a hybrid capacity-building seminar under the UN Development Account 14th tranche project “Enhanced capacities of selected countries in the ECE region for pandemic-resilient, sustainable cross-border trade and transport”.
2. The overall concept is to promote a standardized, seamless digital flow of information on cargo along the Euro-Asian corridors (Silk Road, TRACECA, Trans-Caspian and other trade and transport corridors) using the standards and Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model (MMT RDM) of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) as a common IT semantic basis for this exchange. In 2020-2022, UNECE developed a package of standards for multimodal data exchange, covering the key modal consignment notes and bills of lading and additional documents for the key modes of transport. The package contains Business Requirement Specifications and supporting datasets, data structures, code lists, and XSD schemas, from which XML, JSON, API, and other technology tools can be derived. Pilot Implementation projects have started, including a project on the digitalization of a railway consignment note along the Trans-Caspian corridor. Implementation of the UN/CEFACT standards is in the basis for the implementation, for example, of the EU Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation (eFTI)¹ and European Maritime Single Window Environment

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/electronic-freight-transport-information.html>

Regulation². The goal is to make the exchange of freight data among modes of transport and UNECE's sub-regions interoperable, using the global standards.

3. The objectives of this seminar are to:
 - a. Present to a specialized audience the concept of digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange along a cross-border supply chain (digital corridor), using the UN semantic standards and MMT RDM,
 - b. Analyse the importance of harmonized digitalization of data and document exchange on cargo for improving the efficiency of trade and transport corridors,
 - c. Highlight a best practice example in the implementation of the UN/CEFACT standards and MMT RDM – the implementation of the EU Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation and European Maritime Single Window Environment Regulation, which both use the UN/CEFACT standards for their implementation,
 - d. Showcase the possible practical way to digitalize multimodal data and document exchange along a corridor through the experience of the UNECE – TRACECA pilot testing project,
 - e. Analyse challenges and opportunities for pilot projects, identify new feasible pilot projects,
 - f. Identify possibilities for capacity-building for local experts to work on multimodal digitalization using the UN/CEFACT standards and MMT RDM through a “learning-by-doing” approach while implementing pilot projects,
 - g. Examine internal and external resources for advancing multimodal data and document exchange in the region.
4. The SPECA Presidential Summit on 24 November 2023 in Baku, attended by the Prime Minister of Georgia, adopted the “Roadmap for the digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange along the Trans-Caspian transport corridor, using United Nations legal instruments and standards”.³ This roadmap was prepared with support from UNECE in 2022-2023. It envisages the digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange along supply chains in the Trans-Caspian Corridor, using the UN/CEFACT semantic standards and MMT RDM. The countries requested from UNECE to organize capacity-building on the standards for the roadmap at the SPECA Governing Council session on 23 November 2023 and two Ministerial Meetings in April 2023 and April 2024. This seminar is organized as a response to the above and other requests.
5. At the 14th UNECE seminar on trade facilitation and data sharing, held in Baku on 22-23 May 2023, a specialized session on railways led to the signature of an MoU between the railways of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, and Ukraine to participate in a TRACECA and UNECE-led pilot project for the digitalization of the railway consignment note (CIM/SMGS). At the seminar in Tbilisi, participants will deliberate on the next steps in this pilot project with a view to deepen the work on digitalization, accepting the digital railway consignment note, and moving to multimodal data exchange.
6. The problem addressed by the seminar and the UNECE project is the fragmentation of digitalization efforts along the Trans-Caspian and other corridors in the region. A solution would be to align information flows about cargo moving along multimodal digital trade and transport corridors to the global UN/CEFACT semantic standards and MMT RDM. This would also align electronic information exchange to other regions that have adopted the global standards, such as the European Union and its eFTI Regulation.
7. From this perspective, the seminar will seek to:
 - a. Identify business requirements for the digital transformation of concrete documents and sectors of the supply chain in the Trans-Caspian and other corridors,

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/european-maritime-single-window-environment.html>

³ <https://unece.org/speca/speca-digitalization-roadmap>

- b. Discuss possibilities for digitalization of trade and transport documents accompanying goods (consignment notes, bills of lading, and additional documents) as part of the information flows on cargo along the corridors,
 - c. Assess the availability of technical skills to implement the international standards for a harmonized digitalization of multimodal transport data and document exchange; raise awareness and capacity of the participants to roll out digitalization of data and document exchange aligned with the UN/CEFACT standards,
 - d. Review best practices in implementing port community systems in the transition economies of the region and issue recommendations for standardization of data and document exchange.
 - e. Review possibilities for practical implementation notably through interlinked pilot implementation projects. Present the concept of enabling digital platforms. Focus on turning port community systems along the Trans-Caspian Corridor into multimodal digital information exchange hubs or platforms,
 - f. Discuss possibilities for concrete pilot testing of the digitalization of information exchange in collaboration with TRACECA, the Trans-Caspian Transport Route (TMTM) association, and other development partners. Discuss with development partners possible launch of new pilot projects.
8. The target audience of this seminar includes policymakers and experts with technical skills from the relevant national agencies dealing with digitalization, trade regulation, transport and transit procedures, as well as the business community (traders, transporters, freight forwarders, IT developers, etc.). This is a capacity-building event to generate skills in the target countries to implement innovative approaches of harmonized digitalization of data and document exchange along the corridor (interoperable digitalization of consignment notes, bills of lading and additional documents). It will include knowledge and technology transfer for the implementation of electronic information exchange, aligned to UN/CEFACT standards and supporting tools. The target audience will include representatives from the beneficiary countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Ukraine, and other countries in Central Asia and along the Trans-Caspian corridor, as well as development partners and the business community in the region.
 9. Discussions on the contribution of UN standards and involvement of national experts, international organizations and the private sector will help formulate the conclusions and recommendations on the next steps and pilot projects to support relevant initiatives along the corridor(s). Prepare guidelines on how to use the UN/CEFACT semantic standards and MMT RDM to enable multimodal interoperability in data flows along the corridors, how can port community systems become hubs/platforms to support multimodal data and document exchange. Participants, especially from the countries, are invited to formulate concrete actions that their governments may undertake to support the implementation of the Trans-Caspian digitalization roadmap and the UN/CEFACT standards in the digitalization efforts.

CAPACITY-BUILDING SEMINAR AGENDA: DAY ONE, 7 OCTOBER 2024

OPENING SESSION

9:30 – 10:00

Welcome statements:

Ms. Aleksandra Suladze, Deputy Director of Transport and Logistics Development Policy Department Georgia

Concept and expected results of the seminar

Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, ECE
Mr. Roel Janssens, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Transport Division, UNECE

SESSION I: UN STANDARDS FOR DIGITALIZATION OF MULTIMODAL DATA AND DOCUMENT EXCHANGE

10:00 – 11:15

Moderator: Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE

The concept of harmonized multimodal freight information exchange, using the UN standards, as basis for digital corridors

Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE

Package of UN/CEFACT standards for multimodal digitalization; how to use them

Ms. Hanane Becha, UN/CEFACT Vice Chair

Presentation of the standards on the web

Mr. Felix Guimard, UNECE Economic Affairs Officer

Best practice example of the use of the UN standards: EU Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation (eFTI)

Mr. Michael Dill, International expert

A business perspective: cost and time efficiency from standardized digital information exchange along the Trans-Caspian Corridor

Mr. Irakli Danelia, Central Asia and Caucasus Region Business Development Manager Maersk

11:15 – 11:30

Break

11:30 – 12:30

Practical example of digitalization using the UN standards: testing the CIM/SMGS consignment note

Mr. Orkhan Namazov, UNECE consultant

Multimodal digitalization to improve efficiency in trade and transport corridors; electronic platforms as enablers for multimodal digitalization

Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE

Framework for information digitalization in intermodal transport

Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski, UNECE Transport Division

Discussion from the perspective of the SPECA Roadmap for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange along trade and transport corridors, using the UN standards

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch break

SESSION II: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

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| 13:30 – 15:00 | <p>Moderator: Goran Andreev, Permanent Secretariat IGC TRACECA</p> <p>e-CIM/SMGS pilot project Mr. Goran Andreev, Permanent Secretariat IGC TRACECA</p> <p>Country railway and UN/CEFACT experts on progress with the e-CIM/SMGS pilot project: <i>tour de table</i> discussion Experts from railways of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, and Ukraine, UN/CEFACT, OSJD, CIT, UIC, and others</p> <p>Recent developments in OSJD SMGS technical specification, Unified Railway Law UNECE, OSJD, and other experts</p> <p>Possible new pilot implementation projects Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE</p> |
| 15:00 – 15:15 | <i>break</i> |
| 15:15 – 17:30 | <p>Session II, part 2</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Hanane Becha, UN/CEFACT Vice Chair</p> <p><i>Tour de table</i> discussion: digitalization projects for consignment notes and bills of lading in the Trans-Caspian corridor countries from a multimodal perspective Speakers from the countries (from Georgia) / railway and other agencies, international experts</p> <p>Port-to-port information exchange, Port Community Systems, and the use of UN/CEFACT standards Ms. Galyna Roizina, Odessa, Ukraine Mr. David Varshanidze, LEPL Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia Representative of the Port of Aktau Mr. Michael Dill, international expert</p> <p>Use of international standards for business-to-customs information exchange Mr. Constantin Ciuta, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD/ASYCUDA Ms. Irina Sigua, Revenue Service of Georgia</p> <p>Building partnership to support standardized digital data exchange in the Trans-Caspian and other digital corridors Representatives of development partners (USAID and others), UN, Government of Georgia (tbc)</p> <p>Elaborating recommendations from the seminar: linking public, private, business, and regulatory information flows more seamless multimodal data and document exchange [Moderated by Ms. Hanane Becha]</p> |
| 17:30 | <i>End of day one</i> |

CAPACITY-BUILDING SEMINAR AGENDA: DAY TWO, 8 OCTOBER 2024

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| 9:15 – 9:30 | <p>Opening of the Sixth Meeting of the UNECE/ECO Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors</p> <p>Moderator: <i>UNECE Sustainable Transport Division</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chair and Vice Chair of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5)</i> • <i>Representatives of host country Georgia</i> • <i>Representative of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)</i> |
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SESSION III: POLICY SEGMENT AND PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE ON MULTIMODAL DATA AND DOCUMENT EXCHANGE IN DIGITAL CORRIDORS USING UN/CEFACT STANDARDS

This policy segment will be part of the agenda of the corridor committee, explaining the concept, providing best practice examples, addressing two fundamental issues: how to overcome the fragmentation of digitalization efforts, and how to ensure using the same semantic standard foundation for freight information exchange in digital trade and transport corridors, among countries, legal regimes, and sub-regions.

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| 9:30 – 12:00 | <p>Moderator: Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE</p> <p>The rationale of using UN semantic standards and the Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model for multimodal seamless data exchange along corridors Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE</p> <p>The essence of UN/CEFACT standards and family of reference data models. Package of standards for multimodal data exchange; implementation cases Ms. Hanane Becha, UN/CEFACT Vice Chair</p> <p>Using the standards from the UNECE web site Mr. Felix Guimard, UNECE Economic Affairs Officer</p> <p>Standardization to improve efficiency of seamless information flows in multimodal trade and transport corridors Mr. Michael Dill, international expert</p> <p>Pilot implementation projects: example of railway consignment note digitalization Mr. Goran Andreev, Permanent Secretariat IGC TRACECA Mr. Orkhan Namazov, expert, Azerbaijan</p> |
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| 10:45 – 11:00 | Coffee break |
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| 11:00 – 12:00 | Panel discussions [Moderated by Ms. Hanane Becha and Mr. Mario Apostolov]: |
| Session III continued | What impediments exist for digitalization of data and document exchanges using the UN standards? How to overcome the problem of fragmentation of digitalization projects, syntaxes, national and regional systems, while responding to unimodal legal regimes? How to effectively align efforts in ports, |

maritime, rail, road, and air cargo data exchange with the international standards?

What pilot projects are feasible?

Partnerships and synergies to support implementation projects and the methodology for implementing UN digitalization standards.

Organizing capacity-building for digitalization experts on how to implement UN standards in supply chains

12:00 – 12:30

CLOSING SESSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and recommendations will focus on (1) practical guidelines on the steps for implementing UN standards in real world digitalization projects in transport and supply chains; (2) pilot digitalization projects for multimodal data and document exchange using global standards (e.g., to implement the SPECA Trans-Caspian multimodal digitalization roadmap; (3) how to organize a network to train experts.

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch
