



UN/CEFACT NEWSLETTER



Dear UN/CEFACT expert community!

As we reflect on our joint achievements of 2023 and conclude this eventful and impactful year, we are pleased to share our annual newsletter, highlighting key milestones and activities that have shaped our dynamic and impactful year.

Throughout the year, your dedicated efforts have been instrumental in restoring disrupted supply chains, addressing the challenges posed by conflicts, and contributing to the green and digital transformations.

2023 in numbers

KEY FIGURES

+1631
EXPERTS

29
PROJECTS

+70
COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

+100
PLEDGES FOR
«THE
SUSTAINABILITY
PLEDGE»

23
INTERACTIVE
SESSIONS
DURING THE
41TH FORUM

25
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCES
CONTRIBUTED

14+4
NEWS &
PRESS
RELEASES

564
TOTAL
REFERENCES
IN ARTICLES

1bn
ESTIMATED
MEDIA
REACH



~ A number of important activities took place in 2023 ~

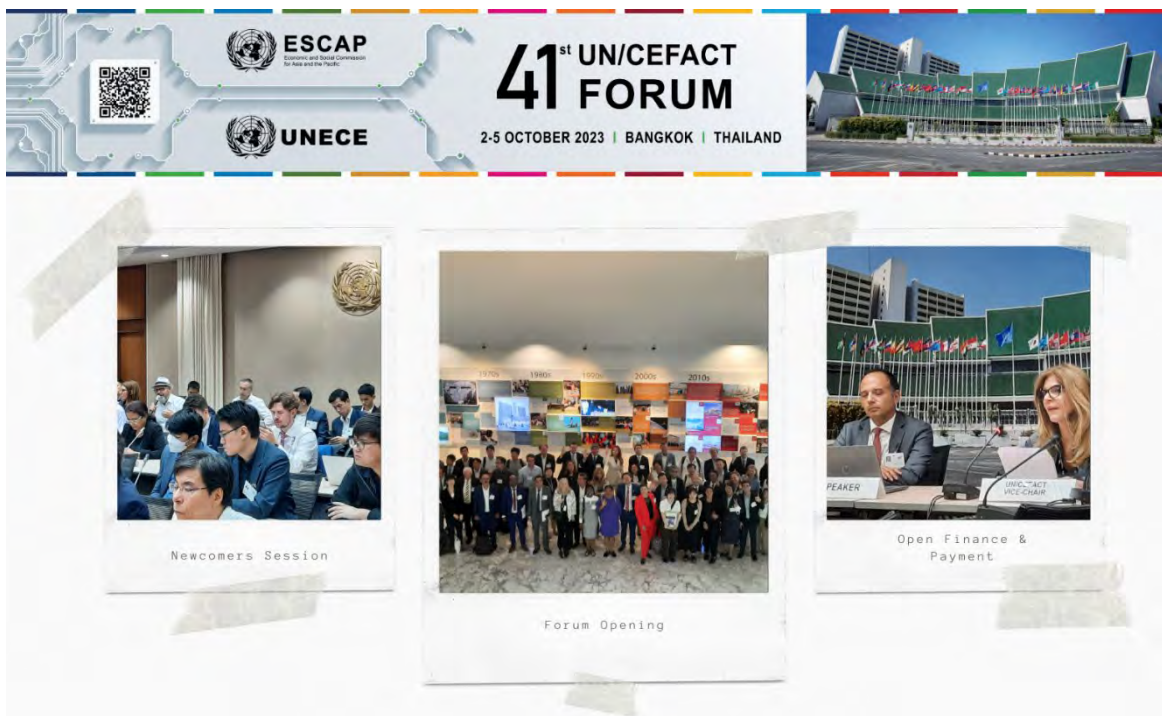


[40th UN/CEFACT Forum](#) took place from 8 to 12 May 2023 in Geneva. This first-ever hybrid Forum with a record level of participation brought together 350 in-person participants from over 55 countries and welcomed an additional 1,500 virtual attendees. The five day-long gathering included 36 interactive sessions, providing a platform for global trade experts from the public and private sectors to explore standards and recommendations for trade facilitation while examining emerging trends in trade, transport, finance, and e-business, as well as resilience and sustainability.



The [2023 meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group](#) was held on 11-12 May 2023. Following the decision to set up a UN/LOCODE Task Force to address the UN/LOCODE maintenance policy issues, the UN/LOCODE Task Force was launched at its kick-off meeting on 28th September 2023.

As requested, at the 29th UN/CEFACT Plenary, the Group's Programme of Work (2024-2025) was approved and the mandate of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group was extended with another two-year term.



The [41st UN/CEFACT Forum](#) took place from 2 to 5 October 2023 in Bangkok. Co-hosted with ESCAP, this Forum gathered over 300 trade facilitators from over 60 countries both in-person and online. The Forum's overarching theme focused on digital and green transformations as well as climate action for sustainable development, aligning with recent

decisions by member States at the Commission sessions of UNECE and ESCAP. Among key areas of focus was the adoption of digital technologies to enable streamlined and efficient supply chain processes.



The [29th UN/CEFACT Plenary](#) session held in November 2023 gathered nearly 60 participants from 22 UN Member States in the session to review and endorse the UN/CEFACT deliverables produced since the last Plenary. Those included the ECE Recommendation No.48 on Private Sector Participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies, the latest versions of key UN/CEFACT standards, reports on activities of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group and the Team of Specialists on ESG Traceability of SVC in the CE as well as updates from various UN/CEFACT domains.

In addition, this session marked the successful election of six UN/CEFACT Vice-Chairs nominated by Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, France, Italy, and the Kyrgyz Republic for the term of 2023-2026 as well as three Regional Rapporteurs from Brazil, Japan and Senegal to promote UN/CEFACT activities in Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa during 2023-2025.



The [3rd Meeting of Team of Specialists \(ToS\) on Environmental, Social and Governance Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains](#) took place on the 23rd of November 2023. This multi-stakeholder, collaborative and cross-sectoral dialogue convened 50 experts from +20 countries in Geneva and 40 experts online, to forge international collaboration and synergies. Interoperability of information exchange is one of the key needs identified to scale up access to ESG data in value chains. The [draft UNECE Recommendation No. 49](#) on 'Transparency at Scale' will aim to scale traceability, transparency and trusted information exchange.

Check out:

- [UNECE tools can pave the way for enhanced trade facilitation in the Republic of Moldova](#)
- [UNECE to support scaling up transparency for sustainable value chains.](#)
- [New UNECE recommendation to strengthen private sector participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies](#)
- [UNECE calls on fashion industry to fully embrace sustainability](#)
- [Advancing digital, green, and sustainable trade facilitation on the global stage](#)
- [UNECE focuses on cross-cutting priorities of digitalization and green transformation for its trade-related work](#)
- [UNECE blockchain pilot for cotton paves the way for more sustainable fashion](#)
- [UNECE trains Turkmenistan's government officials on regulatory and procedural trade measures as part of accession to WTO](#)



The [Forty-fifth Meeting of the IEC-ISO-ITU-UNECE Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding Management Group](#) was held from the 12th to the 13th of December 2023. The meeting, attended by International User Groups with a core mission in electronic business standards, aimed at coordinating work programs. The overarching goal is to optimize the utilization of limited resources for standardization, ensuring efficiency and relevance in the ever-evolving digital landscape. The meeting saw active participation from a diverse group of 39 attendees, both physically and remotely engaged. The meeting focused on facilitating new and advancing existing areas of coordination. New areas of coordination in the domain of e-business were identified: privacy and privacy-by-design, PKI, on geospatial, metaverse, digital health certificate, SMART standards, industry data and artificial intelligence.



Furthermore, the meeting reported on the past [Webinar on Semantics and Semantic Interoperability](#). The report encapsulates the pivotal discussions and insights from the recent global gathering on semantics and semantic interoperability organized by the [IEC-ISO-ITU-UNECE Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding Management Group](#). In a world inundated with diverse data, this report serves as a compass, guiding readers through the profound considerations, anticipated advantages, and challenges explored by international experts. From the evolution of data exchange structures showcased by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business to ISO's endeavors in implementing semantics in industrial data and IEC's perspectives on semantic interoperability in smart cities, the report unfolds a rich tapestry of knowledge. Delve into the collective wisdom of these global authorities as they navigate the intricacies of electronic business, offering valuable insights and forging pathways toward harmonization and interoperability in our digital landscape.

The UN/CEFACT's reported progress on several key actions including:

- Publication of updated UN/CCL, UN/LOCODE, UN/EDIFACT Directories and various other technical specifications.
- Achieved the publication of API-related specifications and new active work on developing API construction guidelines.
- Completed Recommendation No. 48 on Private Sector Participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies.
- Progress on White Papers for Digitizing Transit Accompanying Documents and Digital Product Conformity Certificates Exchange.
- Launched Recommendation No. 49, "Transparency at Scale," addressing traceability in supply chains.

From left: (Martin Euchner - ITU, Stephen Dutnall - IEC, Laura Mathew – ISO, Yan Zhang and Kevin Bishop – UNECE)

Furthermore, the group expressed many thanks to Mr. Martin Euchner

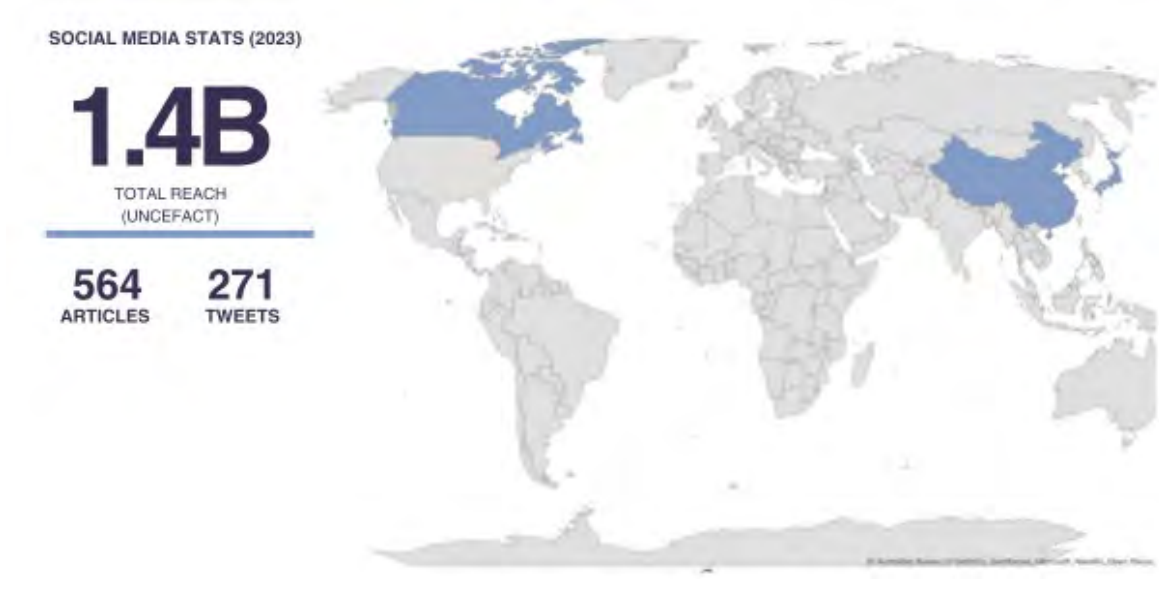
The MoU/MG expresses its heartfelt thanks to Mr Martin Euchner who had to step down as ITU-T stakeholder representative and acting MoU/MG Secretary in 2023. Martin had been involved in the MoU/MG since 2011 and had been a constant support in both providing the ITU-T voice and the MoU/MG development throughout his time with the group. His contributions have been invaluable, and we are truly grateful for the knowledge, expertise and energetic discussions that he brought to the table.

Martin leaves behind a remarkable legacy and the MoU/MG extends its best wishes to him for a fulfilling retirement as he embarks on this well-earned chapter of life.



Looking ahead, we would like to highlight the following events in 2024 that may be of relevance to you:

- 132nd ECE Executive Committee meeting on **13 February 2024, in Geneva**, where Matters relating to UN/CEFACT will be discussed (presentation of the 29th UN/CEFACT Plenary decisions).
- UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region on **13-14 March 2024 in Geneva**, Palais des Nations
- 2024 Meeting of UN/LOCODE Advisory Group on **6-7 May 2024 in Hamburg, Germany**.
- 42nd UN/CEFACT Forum on **8-10 July 2024 in Geneva, Palais des Nations**
- ToS Session on **3 October 2024**, in Geneva, Palais des Nations
- 30th UN/CEFACT Plenary on **11-12 July 2024 in Geneva, Palais des Nations**
- 43rd UN/CEFACT Forum (**Date TBC**), in Rome, Italy



Together with UN Regional Commissions and UNCTAD, UNECE launched the results of the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in July and the 2023 Global Report of the Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in September, with relevant events being held during the WTO Public Forum and the UNCTAD eWeek.

We make every effort to ensure that **UN/CEFACT tools and recommendation remain relevant and impactful**, and you will see that our tools have been referenced in several websites and publications.

We spotlight the recent advancements in UN/CEFACT standards and their profound impact on international trade and electronic business. We invite you to explore these updated standards and leverage their transformative potential in your trade and business operations.

The newly updated standards include the:

- UN/CEFACT Core Component Library (version 23A)
(http://www.unece.org/cefact/codesfortrade/uncccl/ccl_index.html)
- UN/CEFACT XML Schema Library (version 23A)
(http://www.unece.org/cefact/xml_schemas/index)
- UN/EDIFACT Directory (version D.23A)
(<https://unece.org/uncefact/unedifact/2021-2022>)

- UN/LOCODE Directory (versions 2023-1 and 2023-2) (<http://www.unece.org/cefact/locode/welcome.html>)
- UN/CEFACT JSON-LD Web Vocabulary (<https://vocabulary.uncefact.org>)
- All UN/CEFACT e-business standards (<https://unece.org/trade/uncefact/mainstandards>)
- All UN/CEFACT e-business context files, schemas, and OpenAPI specifications on the Open-Source GitHub Environment (<https://github.com/uncefact>)



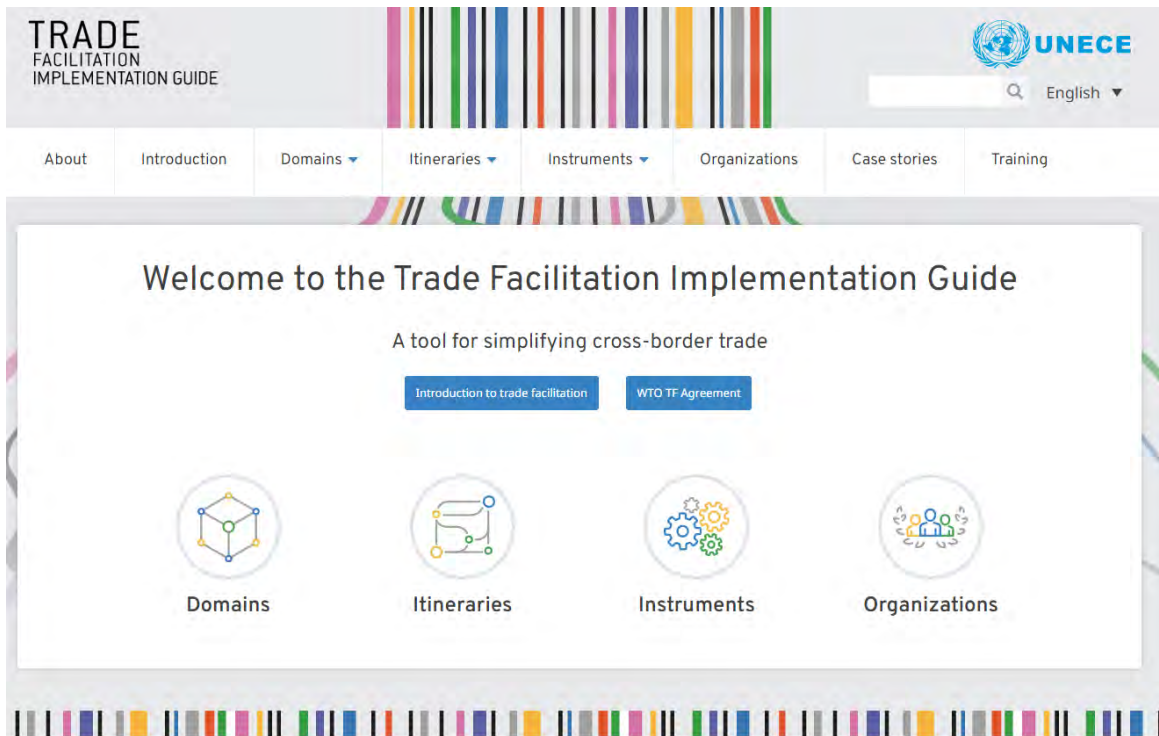
“Explained how the use of the UN/EDIFACT standard could significantly optimize both communication and efficiencies within a large and complex network such as that of the maritime industry. The company sends over 250 million messages per year using the UN/EDIFACT standard, with 113,000 messages being sent from one ship alone when entering a port.”

Claudio Bozzo of MSC
Mediterranean Shipping S.A.

Furthermore, we are delighted to share the positive reviews and feedback received from the user community. These reviews affirm our commitment to delivering standards that are not only freely accessible but meet the evolving needs of the user community, promoting efficiency, and driving positive transformations in the landscape of international trade.



Significant progress has been made on technical cooperation activities with support provided to transition economies, such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



A new version of the UN Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide e-learning platform has been launched and presented in Albania, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. More trainings are planned in 2024. This training tool, available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, has received over 7 million hits to date, from more than 300,000 single users.



Under the [Sustainability Pledge initiative](#), UNECE supported the implementation of ESG traceability with the blockchain pilots for textiles and leather throughout value chains (check out: Updated Report on the Blockchain Pilots Project for the Garment and Footwear Sector). In 2023, the UNECE's call to action the Sustainability Pledge received +100 pledges from +750 actors globally.

Jointly with the Regional Adviser, the secretariat is advancing on developing the National Trade Facilitation Roadmap for Uzbekistan, scheduled to launch in 2024.

Building on the results of the Survey, a technical assistance project “Enhancing capacity to develop evidence-based policy making for digital and sustainable trade facilitation, to support the accession to the WTO of targeted beneficiary countries in the Central Asian region” is in the process of being implemented, with a focus on Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Accordingly, a policy study is being prepared under the project and a technical workshop has been organized in Baku, Azerbaijan on 20 November during the 18th Session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade and the 2023 SPECA Economic Forum, in collaboration with ESCAP, with high-level participants from the Republic of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan.



The [2023 Global Report of the Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation](#) was launched on 15 September in Geneva during the WTO Public Forum, co-organized by ESCAP, UNECE and UNCTAD, with speakers from the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan and Republic of Uzbekistan and partner organizations such as UNCITRAL exchanging perspectives and experiences.



Shaping the future of the digital economy

During the [UNCTAD eWeek](#) – Shaping the Future of the Digital Economy on 4th to 8th December 2023, UNECE co-organized two events. The Postal Network as an Enabler for e-Commerce and Trade Facilitation, co-organized with UPU; the session showcased UN/CEFACT's standards in support of the postal industry.



Another side event on the [UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation](#) has also been organized by UNECE and ESCAP on 6 December 2023 in Geneva during the [UNCTAD eWeek 2023: Shaping the future of the digital economy](#). Speakers from UNECE, ESCAP and UNCTAD, as well as country representatives from the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Kyrgyz Republic have presented latest findings and policy initiatives from the Survey.

For more information for UN/CEFACT and UNECE activities, please visit:

unece.org/trade/uncefact

unece.org

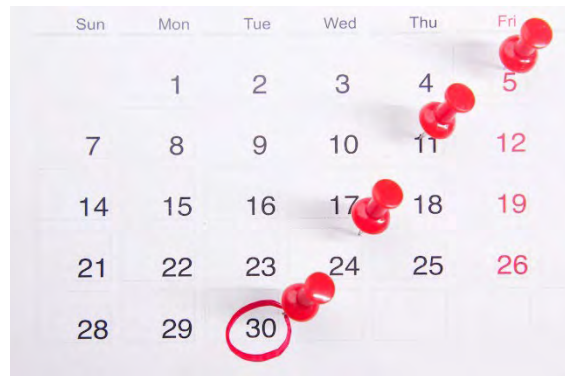
Standards and Publications



Publications and materials from recent standardization activities are now available on the UNECE website to view.

[Read More](#)

Other upcoming events in 2024



Stay tuned for an exciting lineup of upcoming meetings and events as UN/CEFACT continues to drive global trade innovation and collaboration.

[View Events](#)

Are you a professional wishing to join UN/CEFACT expert community?

[Click here to register](#)



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