

44th Meeting of the IEC-ISO-ITU-UNECE eB MoU/MG

Report from UN/CEFACT ITP-PDA

Background

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) International Trade Procedures Program Development Area (ITP-PDA) was established to concentrate on business processes, commercial practices and official procedures involved in international trade transactions as well as providing guidance and recommendations on key topics. The ITP-PDA is the successor of TBG15 (International Trade Procedures Working Group) and of GE2 of UNECE Working Party 4 which finds its origins in the 1960s.

Under this area of activity, UN/CEFACT has developed over two dozen trade policy recommendations, a dozen executive guides and a number of white papers. These include key themes such as:

- Consultation between private and public sectors (National Trade Facilitation Committees, consultation, Public-Private-Partnership in Trade Facilitation...)
- Layout of Trade Documents (the United Nations Layout Key – UNLK and examples such as invoice, consignment instructions...)
- Facilitating and monitoring measures (maritime transport document procedures, authentication...)
- Single Window (implementation, legal framework, interoperability...)

Recent achievements of UN/CEFACT ITP-PDA

Revision of Recommendation 2: Semantic information and codes in international trade data exchange

The revision of Recommendation 2 has been finalised. It recalls the importance of codes, code lists and semantics as used within the UN/CEFACT environment, describe the process of digitization (document centric) and dematerialization (process-driven) and how this is approached within the UN/CEFACT environment. It also amends the International Supply Chain Reference Model (ISCRM) by adding pre-Buy phase and a post-Pay phase to address issues of sustainable consumption.

White paper on private sector involvement in trade facilitation measures

The White Paper has been finalised and approved by the plenary. The white paper discusses the current state of private sector participation in national trade facilitation bodies and recommends actions to be taken to enhance this participation. The WP complements Recommendation 4.

Recommendation No. 38: Trade Information Portals

Transparency and predictability are essential elements for the cross-border movement of goods. Stakeholders need to know the conditions for the entry or exit of their goods well before the goods arrive at the border in order to prepare all regulatory requirements and commercial negotiations. A Trade Information Portal (TIP) is a facility that compiles these requirements and publishes the information on an internet portal accessible to all relevant traders. This recommendation provides guidance on how to set up such a portal, what information should be shared, the governance, as well as some elements which have been identified as potential evolutions. It is accompanied by a repository of case studies of such facilities in order to help countries navigate through the best possible solutions for their requirements.

Upcoming activities of UN/CEFACT ITP-PDA

Recommendation No. XX: Private Sector Participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies

Based on the accomplished White paper on this topic, a recommendation will be drafted to provide further guidance to governments on enhancing private sector participation.

White Paper on Digitizing Transit Accompanying Documents (Jointly with AGRI PDA)

This White Paper looks into access to electronic data or digital documents for authorities of transit countries (WTO definition of transit). It appears that current approaches and solutions for digitalisation of trade documents, i.e. regulatory documents, rely on a bilateral data exchange between the issuing and destination authority. Digital certificates are issued and exchanged in electronic format between the issuing and destination authority, using various digital environments. However, transit authorities may not, by default, have access to neither the electronic version of the certificate nor the minimum data it needs for its procedure. Countries may also not have the legal basis to specifically recognize the dematerialized or digital certifications for products in transit. The White Paper explores this issue on the example of selected cross-border trade documents. Termination is scheduled by mid 2023.

White paper on Digital Product Conformity Certificates Exchange (Jointly with AGRI PDA)

This White Paper looks into the transition from paper and pdf-based exchange of product conformity credentials towards a paperless future. Product conformity systems and mutual recognition agreements provide global quality assurance and supply chain safety mechanisms. The increasing complexity of supply chains is adversely impacting the visibility of the product conformity assessment processes, potentially reducing trust in product claims.

Current product conformity and claims verification processes are vulnerable and cumbersome in an increasing digital trade environment. CASCO, the ISO International Committee on Conformity Assessments, has declared digitalisation a high priority to enhance international product conformity systems integrity. Digital validation of credentials and claims, including product certification, provides an important anchor of trust and means to establish the bona fides of the issuing authorities.

This White Paper aims to stocktake, align, and integrate existing UN/CEFACT bodies of knowledge with frameworks being developed by the global product conformity community, including IAF and ILAC members. Termination is scheduled by early 2023.

Single Window Assessment Methodology

A Single Window should result in streamlined procedures, faster border clearance, centralized information and many other benefits for both the public and private sectors. But how to measure the effectiveness of implementations and what criteria to use? The project involves developing a standard methodology for assessing the level of development of the Single Window based on indicators systemized from international recommendations and best practices of countries. The project will strengthen the capacity of countries to understand the goals and objectives of the Single Window implementation and reveal the directions for further simplification of trade procedures.

Enhancing the Repository of Single Window Case Studies accompanying Rec33 and the Repository of Single Submission Portals accompanying Rec37

The UNECE maintains repositories of case studies for some of its key recommendations. These repositories are managed through a template questionnaire that stakeholders can fill out and submit for publication on the UNECE website. The repository of Single Window case studies which accompanies Recommendation 33 has recently updated its template and is seeking new submissions as well as updates to existing submissions. Recommendation 37 has also been established with a similar case study repository and template and is seeking new submissions.

Future topics

To be considered.