

UN/CEFACT Project Proposal

Project Name:	Toolbox for enhancing digital and sustainable trade facilitation along transit trade and transport corridors		
Date submitted:		Proposed by:	
Relevant SDG targets :	8, 9, 10, 11, 17		

(Please list all relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets that this project relates to)

1. Project purpose

Required

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) held its thirtieth Plenary on 11 and 12 July 2024. In response to the 70th Commission session and building on existing UN/CEFACT work supporting multimodal data exchange along supply chains, the Plenary encouraged the development of a policy recommendation and accompanying implementation instruments to support United Nations Member States in enhancing digital and sustainable trade facilitation along trade and transport corridors.

A high-level policy dialogue was held on the role of climate-smart connectivity and digital trade and transport corridors in support of regional and global integration and sustainable development addressed the growing importance of climate-smart connectivity and digital trade and transport corridors for United Nations Member States, including ECE member States and programme countries. It explored the role of international, regional and national initiatives for the digitalization of data and document exchange to improve supply chain efficiency and to reduce costs for trade actors along such corridors.

There is a growing importance of UN/CEFACT tools in managing the complexities of data transfer across different modes of transport. As, such, the policy recommendation will build on the UN/CEFACT Package of Standards for data exchange along the supply chain.

2. Project scope

Required

The modern era of international trade involves increasingly complex interactions between people, firms, and organizations. Effective trade performance now requires connectivity across roads, rail, sea, telecommunications, financial markets, and information processing. Inefficient or inadequate systems in transportation, logistics, and trade infrastructure can severely hinder trade opportunities and competitiveness, especially for transition economies.

Over the recent years, the United Nations Member States have been increasingly shifting towards the digital exchange of data and documents, which aims to improve efficiency, reduce costs, enhance transparency, and enable better accessibility and data analysis for trade processes. This transition also holds the potential to foster greener and more inclusive economies.

One of the examples of recognition of the relevance of UN/CEFACT tools for digital transformation, in November 2023 is the adoption of the “Roadmap for the Digitalization of Multimodal Data and Document Exchange along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor” by the SPECA participating States. There is an increasing importance of seamless connectivity across various modes of transport and

information exchange for effective trade performance. The role of digital connectivity for countries' integration into the global economy.

This policy recommendation aims to be used at the global level since digital technologies and digital transformation have a strong potential for enhancing the integration of landlocked developing countries in the global economy, creating new opportunities for trade and transport to reap the full benefits of green and sustainable economic development.

The SPECA Roadmap leverages UN instruments and standards such as the TIR Convention, the CMR Convention, and the UN/CEFACT Package of Standards to optimize processes, address non-physical barriers and promote seamless movement of goods in the Trans-Caspian corridor.

- **The TIR Convention** to simplify and harmonise the administrative formalities of international road transport.
- **The CMR Convention** standardizes contractual and carrier liability conditions of transporting goods by road in vehicles for reward if the origin and destination are in two different countries, and at least one of the countries is a contracting party.
- **The UN/CEFACT Package of Standards for data exchange along the supply chain** offers a comprehensive suite of deliverables for seamless electronic multimodal data and document exchange, including a common business requirement specification (BRS) customized for the different modes of transport, and supporting deliverables.
- **White paper** - Gaps In Aligning Digitization with Transit Procedures
- **White paper** - Cross-Border Multimodal Digital Corridors for Regulatory-Related Movements of Consignment Data and Consignment Status Information for Trade Facilitation –

There is a global relevance to the adopted SPECA Roadmap for the Digitalization of Multimodal Data and Document Exchange Along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, amidst the twenty-first-century crises disrupting supply chains and escalating logistics costs.

This initiative, involving SPECA landlocked developing countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), aims to streamline cross-border freight transport by 2027 through digital data exchange. From 2027 onwards, economic operators and authorities in these countries will use electronic transport data, aligned with UN standards, to enhance the efficiency of goods movement.

The SPECA Roadmap could serve as a model for other transit corridors globally, particularly for transport corridors in Africa and Asia with similar challenges connecting landlocked and transit countries.

The SPECA Roadmap key areas of focus include:

- Implementing international digital standards (e.g., e-CMR, digital signatures).
- Addressing legal and procedural gaps.
- Optimizing data flows across various transport modes.
- Phasing out outdated practices that hinder digital progress.

The timeline outlines specific steps:

- By 2024, eTIR systems and discussions on B2B data exchange will begin.
- By 2025-2026, multimodal eTIR, electronic bills of lading, and eCMR will be in use.
- By 2027, digital systems for rail and air transport will be operational.

A new action plan will be established for further digitalization by 2028. This approach has the potential to revolutionize trade corridors at the global level involving multimodal transport.

3. Project deliverables and 4. Exit Criteria

Required (check all that apply)

Please note that the Bureau may reassess and change a deliverable after its completion at its discretion.

	Project deliverables	Exit Criteria
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy Recommendation	Public Review logs demonstrating all comments have been satisfactorily resolved; Final document ready for publication.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Requirement Specification	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Specification	Final document ready for publication.
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Paper	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Paper	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requirement Specification Mapping	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Core Component Business Document Assembly	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guidelines	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Executive Guide	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brochure	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Entries/alignment to the Core Component Library	Final deliverable ready for publication.
<input type="checkbox"/>	XML Schema	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UN/EDIFACT message	Final document ready for Bureau approval.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal UN/CEFACT Document	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	

5. Impact analysis

Please indicate how these project deliverables will affect trade facilitation policies and regulations. Please highlight any anticipated / tangible results achieved. Indicate how the results and impact can be evaluated after the project is completed.

To develop the policy recommendation and accompanying implementation instruments to support United Nations Member States in enhancing digital and sustainable trade facilitation along trade and transport corridors, the project will hold expert meetings and take into consideration their inputs to deliver the final draft of the recommendation (deliverables) that will be submitted for open consultation and approved by the Bureau and the Plenary.

It is expected that the policy recommendation will have a positive impact on the trade community by leveraging:

- The UN/CEFACT Package of Standards facilitating data exchange among stakeholders through multiple transport modes (including road, rail, sea and others) creating a harmonized environment for electronic data transfer. To do so, the policies for national trade facilitation have to be harmonized with International Standards such as the TIR Convention, CMR Convention and UN/CEFACT data exchange standards.

- The transition to digital exchange of data and documents to make customs clearance and border management processes more effective. To achieve this, trade facilitation policies need to reflect paperless and digitalized aspects of trade and customs documents.
- Climate-smart connectivity and digital transport corridors to make trade more efficient and sustainable. It requires the promotion of greener trade facilitation policies and actions toward reducing carbon emissions and fuel consumption in logistics.

6. Project Team membership and required functional expertise

Membership is open to UN/CEFACT experts with broad knowledge in the area of:

In addition, Heads of Delegations may invite technical experts from their constituency to participate in the work.

Experts are expected to contribute to the work based solely on their expertise and to comply with the UN/CEFACT Code of Conduct and Ethics and the policy on Intellectual Property Rights.

7. HoD support

Required for Technical Standards, Business Standards and UNECE Recommendations. And at the request of the UN/CEFACT Bureau. A request for HoD support will be circulated to all HoDs in these cases. If you have verbal confirmation from specific delegations of their support, please list these here. Projects that require HoD support must obtain this within 6 months of Bureau provisional approval.

8. Geographical focus

The geographical focus of the project is global

9. Beneficiaries

Highlight relevance for sustainable and digital trade facilitation in developing and transition economies, and benefits to vulnerable groups (e.g. MSMEs and women-led businesses)

Sustainable and digital trade facilitation in developing and transition economies enhances their participation in global trade by lowering costs and increasing the efficiency and transparency of trade facilitation processes. In addition, it enables countries to be better positioned to attract Foreign Direct Investment and promote trade-led economic growth.

The private sector can benefit from greater market access. MSMEs and women-led businesses can benefit from more transparency and streamlining of procedures as well as lower trade-related and transaction costs.

Countries adopting this policy recommendation will be more resilient facing future supply chain disruptions and become more competitive economies promoting inclusiveness, sustainability and innovation.

10. Initial contributions

The following contributions are submitted as part of this proposal. It is understood that these contributions are only for consideration by the Project Team and that other participants may submit additional contributions in order to ensure that as much information as possible is obtained from those with expertise and a material interest in the project. It is also understood that the Project Team may choose to adopt one or more of these contributions “as is”.

List any initial contributions:

- UN/CEFACT Package of Standards for Data Exchange along the Supply Chain
- UN legal instruments and standards, such as the TIR Convention and the CMR Convention
- Pilot projects related to digitalizing intermodal transport corridors
- Roadmap for the Digitalization of Multimodal Data and Document Exchange Along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor Using United Nations Legal Instruments and Standards
- Gaps In Aligning Digitization with Transit Procedures (White paper)
- Cross-Border Multimodal Digital Corridors for Regulatory-Related Movements of Consignment Data and Consignment Status Information for Trade Facilitation (White paper)

11. Resource requirements

Participants in the project shall provide resources for their own participation. The existence and functioning of the project shall not require any additional resources from the UNECE secretariat.

Any additional request:

12. Proposed project leadership

(subject to Bureau approval)

Proposed project lead:	Nogaye Diagne DIOP (tbc)	E-mail:	
Proposed Vice Chair:	Nurbek Maksutov Hanane Becha	E-mail:	nurbek.maksutov@yahoo.com hbdigitaltrade@gmail.com
Proposed domain	Trade Procedures Facilitation, Transport and Logistics		

13. Milestones (repeat for each deliverable, if different)

The following are draft milestones of the project.

	ODP Stage	Expected Completion Date	
Yes	Project Inception	1 month	
Yes / No	Requirements gathering	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 month
Yes	Draft development	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 months (Very quick)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months (Quick)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	12 months (Normal)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	18 months (Normal)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	24 months (Long)
Yes / No	Public Draft Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 months
Yes	Project Exit	1 month	