BUILDING BACK BETTER

After nearly a year of COVID-19 and the restrictions that this has caused not only on personal movement but also on trade, the objective now is to build back better. Electronic exchange of information is a key component of this; the majority of dematerialization projects today are directly related to a reaction to the pandemic. However, in this transition to electronic, we should not lose sight of the potential of rethinking the underlying processes. It is not just about taking a paper document and making an electronic equivalent. It is about rethinking the process and evaluating if the information requested is necessary, if it can be inferred by other information already available, and what is the relationship of the underlying process to other related processes.

UN/CEFACT already provides a wide range of tools that can help with this process. The Buy-Ship-Pay model allows to harmonize each individual step on the international supply chain into the larger picture in order to ensure interoperability at all levels based on the very robust semantic Core Component Library. The Reference Data Models allow to use subsets of the library for specific sectors of activities (supply chain, transport/logistics, and others to come) in order to have a comprehensive data model which will remain interoperable with the rest of the supply chain. There are already hundreds of eBusiness standards and code lists which are available and ready to use, all aligned to this semantic base and interoperable between each other. And there are specific projects which directly relate to building back better such as the Pandemic Crisis White Paper, the Disaster Recovery recommendation, the Smart Container White Paper, the Supply Chain Track and Trace and the Sustainable Textile and Leather Traceability projects, all of which should be either published in the coming weeks or presented to the 2021 Plenary.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

UN/CEFACT 26th Plenary, 26 November 2020

UN/CEFACT held its 26th session meeting in a hybrid format allowing all Heads of Delegation and UN-based Missions who desired, to participate remotely on 26 November 2020. This meeting allowed UN/CEFACT to finalize all of the White Papers and technical work which had been developed between April 2019 and April 2020. Two White Papers were finalized on *Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade* and *Core Principles for Managing Risks and Contingencies in the Operation of a Systematically Important Single Window* as well as a *National Trade Facilitation Roadmap for Tajikistan 2019-2024* and the *UNECE Regional Report on Sustainable and Digital Trade Facilitation*. This meeting also allowed to prepare the UN/CEFACT contributions to the sixty-ninth session of the UNECE, notably with the work on *Enhancing Transparency and Traceability for Sustainable Value Chains in Garment and Footwear*. All documents, and the finalized report are available on the Plenary web page.

UN/CEFACT 35th Forum, 5-16 October; 9-13 November 2020

The Q2 Forum had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic; it was deferred to Q4 and transformed into a fully virtual event. Each domain was able to hold meetings and showcase its work. All of the presentations are available on the event webpage. Four webinars were also held during this event on Private sector engagement in NTFBs, Trade Information Portals, Advancements in artificial intelligence and New technology developments.

Project development

The following projects have been finalized since the last report: Message Construction Guide, RASFF, International Forwarding and Transport, Export Packing List, Ship Agent and Ship Broker Minimum Standards Recommendation, Trade Information Portals Recommendation, Header/Envelope and Acknowledgment/Error.

SAVE THE DATES

UN/CEFACT 27th Plenary session 19-20 April 2021 Geneva (currently planned as a face-to-face meeting)
UN/CEFACT 36th Forum, tentatively scheduled for May 2021 in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

UN/CEFACT ACTIVE PROJECTS

The following projects are currently active as of June 2020 within UN/CEFACT; participation in their development is welcome. Your assistance as Head of Delegation / Mission in Geneva to suggest experts for these projects is most welcome.

TPF – Pandemic Crisis Recovery has developed a white paper for situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. This is being converted into a recommendation. – currently out for Public Review

SWD – Information Portals has completed its recommendation and now working on eBusiness standard.

BUY – Transfer of MLETR Titles project shall develop guidance on the electronic exchange of negotiable financial instruments (e.g. Bill of Lading) and demonstrate implementation with Blockchain.
BUY – Cross Industry Supply Chain Track and Trace project is proposing a general standard for physical track and trace of assets, compatible with all existing Supply Chain and T+L standards.
BUY – Automotive project will develop the subsets of the supply chain messages for the automotive industry. New
BUY – eNegotiation project will propose eBusiness standards for the negotiation process. New

SHIP – Dangerous Goods project will develop the eBusiness standards for this process.
SHIP – IMO FAL Mapping project shall create an XML version of the FAL messages which have traditionally been transmitted through UN/EDIFACT messages, in support of the IMO FAL updates.

PAY – Open Finance for Trade Facilitation project will create a White Paper guidance on the subject. New

T+T – Business Standards for Sustainable Tourism project builds upon the Green Paper on Sustainable Tourism and shall produce definitions standards an guidelines on the topic.
T+T – Experience Program Technical Artefacts project is aiming to develop the necessary technical deliverable to allow the exchange of E.P. information as outlined in the Green Paper.

INS – Healthcare Reimbursement Claim – messages between healthcare providers & private insurance.

A+A – Accounting and Audit Reference Data Model will propose a harmonized data set.

AGRI – eQuality Certificate project is continuing its work in order to develop an implementation guide.
AGRI – eCert Implementation Guide project will create a guidance document to assist with implementation.
AGRI – Sustainable Textile and Leather Traceability and Transparency will produce a recommendation and electronic standards to enable sustainable value chains in this sector. currently out for Public Review

ENV – Waste Management and Waste Analysis aims to define electronic data formats for waste management related data such as analysis results, physical and chemical properties, hazardousness…

eDATA – Cross border inter-ledger exchange for Preferential CoO using Blockchain project is proposing to develop guidance and standards for inter-ledger exchanges.
eDATA – Internet of Things for Trade Facilitation project will prepare two White Paper to describe the base principles of this technology and the potential need for standards.
eDATA – Digital Identity for Trade Facilitation project will prepare two White Papers to explore existing Digital ID systems as well as providing guidance on the development of such systems
eDATA – UN/CEFACT Chain project is developing guidance on relevant framework/mechanism.

CBM – Cross Border Management Reference Data Model (CBM-RDM) project will produce a comprehensive subset of the UN/CCL to support all regulatory procedures at the border.

M+T – RDM2API project is exploring the methodology to move from reference data model standards of UN/CEFACT to Application Programming Interfaces to help standardize this step of digitization.
M+T – API Town Plan project is putting together an internal guidance on how UN/CEFACT can best approach and eventually roll out the standardization of Application Programming Interfaces.