


# Revision of Recommendation 14, Authentication of Trade Documents by Means other than Signature

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Submitted date	Last Update Date	Version	Project Proposal Status	Project Page
2012-07-03	2012-07-03	1.0	 OFFICIAL	<a href="#">Revision of Recommendation 14, Authentication of Trade Documents by Means other than Signature</a>

### Project Purpose

The project's purpose is to revise Recommendation 14 Authentication of Trade Documents by means other than Signature. The recommendation was adopted in 1979 and has not been revised since then. After over 30 years, the Recommendation would benefit from an update to reflect the major changes in businesses processes, and government requirements and administrative procedures.

Currently, Recommendation 14 still covers an essential issue, since the number of signatures needed for a border crossing is strongly related to the cost and time involved. Many new technologies are available for authentication of trade documents and so the subject should be expanded to address the requirements for many economies around the globe as they are going toward dematerialisation

### Project Scope

Approved and published in March 1979 (TD/B/FAL/INF.63), Recommendation 14 seeks to encourage the use of electronic data transfer in domestic and cross border trade by recommending that Governments review national and international requirements for signatures on trade documentation and remove where possible. Further, Governments should seek to meet any such requirements through authentication methods or guarantees that can be electronically transmitted. The modern, dynamic trading environment and the rapid improvement of information and communication technologies now provide an opportunity for the objectives of the Recommendation to be increasingly and progressively realised.

Authentication by means other than a (manual) signature involves technology, functional and legal aspects. If these are addressed separately, there is a risk that different recommendations will offer incompatible solutions and it will not be possible to achieve global interoperability of authentication schemes.

Any revised Recommendation 14 should adopt the new structure of stating individual recommendations with Guidelines explaining the rationale and evidence for the suggestions. Much of the existing text could be used again with suitable editorial changes to reflect trade and technology advances since publication.

Parallel work that has been conducted within UN/CEFACT concerning the functional aspects of a specific type of authentication – electronic signatures – could be easily integrated, insofar as it reflects the reality of actual implementations, as it is closely related to the topic and the latest draft of the document (from December 2011) reads like a functional checklist. Likewise, it is important to try to identify, again through actual implementations, the requirements for the creation of a "trusted/secure environment" for these alternative solutions (alternative to a manual signature). To note that these are examples of implementations that replace (manual) signatures by other technological alternatives; others will most likely be identified. Finally, all of these technical solutions available could be included in a repository (separate from the Recommendation itself) which could be easily updated as it evolves.

The scope of a revised Recommendation 14 could, based on the present recommendation, include the following content:  
Recommendations

- removal of the requirement for a signature except where essential for the function of the document
- introduction of other methods to authenticate documents
- creation of a legal framework that permits and gives equal status to authentication methods other than signature
- regular review of documentation used for domestic and cross border trade, possibly by a joint public and private sector effort

### Project Deliverables

A revised recommendation text with recommendation and guidelines, possibly with a repository of case studies and a separate annex listing examples of existing technological solutions.

- A revised recommendation text aiming to be universal and durable in time
- Accompanied by two different types of annex to be updated in light of any future evolutions of legal framework or technical advances
- Annex of checklists for the implementation of electronic signatures and other means of electronic authentication (legally enabling environment, functional requirements...)
- Annex of a repository of case studies of existing technological solutions – either from their legal framework point of view or their functional implementation point of view – or ideally both (which would be one of the main basis of the previous annex)

### Exit Criteria

Recommendation text ready for publishing

Internal and external review logs showing that all serious comments have been considered

### Project Team Membership and Required Functional Expertise

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of trade documents as well as their dematerialisation, or in the legal framework for cross-border trade. Knowledge in the area of secure and reliable electronic interchange of structured data. 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.

## Head of Delegation Support

TBD

## Geographical Focus

The geographic focus is global.

## Initial Contributions

Background paper

## Resource Requirements

The Project should mostly be prepared in between Forums and there might be need for a conference call facility provided by the UNECE secretariat at some point.

## Project Leadership


Project Leader: Lance Thompson

Editors: Gordon Cragge

## Milestones

DELIVERABLE NAME	Project Inception	Expected Completion Date	Requirements Gathering	Expected Completion Date	Draft Development	Expected Completion Date	Public Review	Expected Completion Date	Project Exit	Expected Completion Date	Publication	Expected Completion Date	Maintenance	Expected Completion Date
Recommendation, Annexes, Checklist, Repository	YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES	

## Project Proposal Files

Filer	Modificat 
Document Microsoft Word 97 120528 ITPD Background paper Recommendation 14 Final.doc	Feb 22, 2016 by Gianguglielmo
Document Microsoft Word 97 120528 ITPD Final Project Proposal revision of Recommendation 14.doc	Feb 22, 2016 by Gianguglielmo

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