


# Syntax Focal Point

## Syntax Focal Point

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PDA	Methodology and Technology
Coo rdin ators	<div></div> <div><a href="#">Gait Boxman</a> UN/CEFACT Position Domain-Coordinator, Expert  Areas of Interest Methodology and Technology, Syntax Focal Point  Expertize Data modelling, Library maintenance / production, Standards development, UN/EDIFACT, Validation / auditing, XML / schema production / methodology</div>

Working Area - Syntax Focal Point

(Access only for registered members)

## Background Information

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The United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT) is the global Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) standard developed and maintained by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). EDI is defined as "computer to computer interchange of data according to a message standard with a minimum of human intervention". Differently said, it allows for business documents such as purchase orders, invoices and customs declarations to be exchanged and processed electronically. UN/EDIFACT development started at the end of the 1980s and the standard currently contains 209 business messages. Updated versions are published twice a year.

UN/EDIFACT is used by most international sectors, both in public and private domains, such as retail, transport and logistics, customs, healthcare, agriculture and insurance. No comprehensive information on global implementation is available but statistics from one sector alone showed that UN /EDIFACT was used by more than 100,000 companies and organizations in 2014 with a predicted growth of 10% for 2015.

Generally, EDI provides multiple advantages such as streamlined and cost efficient business processes, increased consumer and patient safety through reliable traceability systems, and significant environmental improvement by reducing paper and optimising the use of transport vehicles and infrastructure.

The UN/EDIFACT standard is well suited to achieve these benefits since:

More than 25 years of development has provided a solid and rich content applicable to thousands of business processes;

- The standard is continually maintained in order to ensure that it is adapted to changes in processes, regulations and new areas;
- Throughout the years, the principle of "backwards compatibility" has been enforced, meaning the users of different versions can exchange messages without problems; and
- The high and increasing number of users ensures a wide pool of expert knowledge globally and affordable software tools.

## Scope

The Entry Point (receive and collect new entries), maintainer and producer of the UN/EDIFACT Directory Database. Maintenance and production cycles are carried out twice per year, typically close to UN/CEFACT Forum – new entries are gathered before the forum and inserted into Entry Point database, during (or close to) the forum is organised Review Session of new entries, shortly after the forum new Directory of UN/EDIFACT messages and other components is generated and published.

The whole process of UN/EDIFACT publication is in details described at [How to: Product the UN/EDIFACT Directory](#)

- New Entries Gathering
  - New entries that became potentially (if approved during review) part of UN/EDIFACT Directory came from Data Maintenance Requests (DMR) that are submitted as filled forms to secretariat ([uncefact@un.org](mailto:uncefact@un.org)) and possibly to Syntax Focal Point – Mr Gait Boxman

- Secretariat should reply and acknowledge reception of such DMR to the submitter and answer any relevant question if all necessary information is provided in submitted DMR form, approximate schedule of Review Session
- Secretariat can also guide potential submitter on how to fill DMR and clarify on required fields if necessary (can consult Syntax Focal point or Domain Coordinators for their expertise of business cases from various industries)
- Secretariat should keep a clear list of received DMRs for each maintenance cycle to share it with other stakeholders – Syntax Focal point, UN/CEFACT Bureau, Domain Coordinators of various domains, Experts etc.
- Secretariat should also keep a list of DMR submitters for each cycle that will be used to organise and invite all submitters to the DMR review session. This list of invitees can also include Syntax Focal point, Methodology and Technology PDA Vice Chair, UN/CEFACT Chair, and any additional experts submitter indicate as essential for the Review process (typically subject matter experts related to DMR).
- New Entries insertion
  - Typically after cut of dates for DMR submission (with some reserve for late submitters), details from received DMRs are inserted into Entry Point Database (stdsapp2000.mdb)
  - Data are exported as a set of Excel files and transferred to Syntax Focal point
- Review Session
  - During the review session, Syntax Focal point will chair the session, share the screen and use Entry Point Database to display details of each DMR for discussion and final decision if DMR is Approved, Approved with modifications, Rejected or Postponed (when DMR submitter needs more time to fix issues or clarify on any detail)
- Directory Production
  - Results of Review Session are transferred from Syntax Focal Point in the form of the updated database file and reports; the database file is used with main Directory database and application for new Directory production, reports are (if possible) signed by UN/CEFACT Chair and stored.
- Directory validation
  - Secretariat carries out new UN/EDIFACT Directory production, compile Directory files, HTML files, and, if necessary, diff reports for substantial changes of a new version and the previous one, and share all outputs with Validation Focal Point and DMR submitters.
- Publication
  - After feedback from DMR Submitters and Validation Focal Point, Secretariat upload files (to the repository at [service.unece.org](https://service.unece.org) or other location if necessary) for public access and post news announcements on [unece.org](https://unece.org)
  - Secretariat can send an explicit notification email to DMR submitters and all relevant parties (Focal points, UN/CEFACT Chair, Methodology and Technology Vice-Chair, Domain Coordinators etc.)
  - Publication files are uploaded to Git repository
    - Into nested directory with version name (create a new one for each release)
    - Into "Latest" directory used in publications as a generic pointer to the latest release
  - <https://unece.org/trade/uncedfact/unedifact/download> - Website is updated with HTML, .zip files of the directory,

## Active Projects

### Content by label

There is no content with the specified labels

## Related Deliverable

- UN/EDIFACT Directory