

TBG - Trade and Business Group : TBG15

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Scope

UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND BUSINESS PROCESS GROUP

TBG15 -International Trade Procedures Working Group

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of trade facilitation (and the enabling electronic business technologies and communications) is to make trade, essentially the movement of traded goods, easier and simpler. The benefits of trade facilitation are most obviously gained in international business transactions. However, trade facilitation can also offer significant gains in the domestic market especially where geographic circumstances such as size of the country or unique features (for examples island nations or land-locked economies) impose difficult trading conditions for the movement of goods.

1.2 The objectives of trade facilitation are two-fold. First, simpler and cost-effective business practices with appropriate commercial records and systems. Second, efficient and effective government processes including legal obligations and proportionate regulations and administrative procedures. The adoption of trade facilitation techniques and tools should offer a more open, transparent and competitive environment for the business community, and government trade controls that are based on accurate revenue collection, risk management techniques and better deployment of resources. Consequently, it is vital that trade facilitation is a fundamental component of trade policy for sustainable economic development, the creation of wealth and employment and the protection of society and its citizens.

1.3 Trade facilitation is definitely not just a technical issue about improving procedures for the movement of goods. Of course, trade facilitation can be a separate initiative to tackle identified trade issues such as integrated border management. However, trade facilitation is probably most effective when incorporated in a broader policy aimed at improving and enhancing the trade performance of a country, region (including sub-regions) a trade sector or industry or indeed individual companies and similar enterprises.

2. Background

2.1 International trade is complex because of the numerous parties involved, the often huge distances the goods travel, the various (and varying) cultural and linguistic differences and the different approaches to the conduct of commercial activity and the controls employed by government. UN/CEFACT was established to produce techniques, tools and good practices to eliminate or significantly reduce the barriers in the complex process of doing international business. These products (referred to as instruments) are especially aimed at the small and medium size enterprise business community as the complexity of international trade processes often deters this sector from entering overseas markets. Equally the instruments are aimed at governments in developing and transition economies as an aid to improve international trade performance.

2.2 UN/CEFACT recognised very early that the complexity of international trade required an innovative approach to the production of its instruments. The volunteer trade, business and information technologies experts were structured into Permanent Groups and subsidiary Working Groups on a domain basis to identify, review and analyse the specific processes and then create practical solutions (often using electronic business applications, but not always) to remove barriers and reduce the time and cost of doing international trade.

3. TBG15 - International Trade Procedures Working Group

3.1 The International Trade Procedures Working Group, designated TBG 15, is a working group within the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG). In turn the TBG is a Permanent Group of UN/

CEFACT, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business. Where TBG15 differs from the other domain working groups is the fact that the Group examines the whole of the international trade transaction from sales contract initiation, through the physical delivery of the trade goods (including official controls and security measures) to the fulfilment of the contract by financial settlement and account reconciliation. Therefore TBG15 covers not just the supply chain but the whole process of trading goods internationally. This coverage is unique among the working groups of TBG.

3.2 TBG15 has a global remit and its purpose is to identify, simplify harmonise and align public and private sector practices, procedures and information flows relating to international trade transactions both in goods and related services. The scope of the working group is the business processes and government legislation, regulations, obligations and official administrative requirements involved in the movement of goods across international borders within the mission statement and objectives of UN/CEFACT and its Permanent Groups and working groups.

3.3 To fulfil its Mission Statement and Terms of Reference and contribute to the overall UN/CEFACT goal of simple transparent and effective processes for global commerce, TBG15 has a comprehensive work programme. Essentially the tasks and projects are divided into three main areas:

- the maintenance of existing UN ECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) and UN/CEFACT Recommendations;
- the development of new Recommendations, and
- new initiatives for trade facilitation techniques and tools to improve the international trade transaction.

Overarching these work pillars TBG15 promotes the adoption of all trade facilitation measure and where possible and feasible offers capacity building to enhance the knowledge and skills of the persons employed and involved in international trade.

3.4 During the past five years TBG 15 has revised Recommendation 6 (Invoice Layout Key) to include an Annex for e-Invoicing, Recommendation 11 (Dangerous Goods Documentation) and Recommendation 18 (Trade Facilitation Measure). Currently the Group is revising Recommendation 12 (Maritime Transport Documents), and through the new initiative programme considering a revision of Recommendation 4 (National Trade Facilitation) to enhance the guidance on private and public consultation models.

3.5 Over the same period TBG15 developed Recommendation 33 (Single Window) and Guidelines to enhance the efficient exchange of information between trade and government. A Repository of Case Studies complemented Recommendation 33 and offered examples of the business models adopted for existing or planned Single Window facilities. The Case Studies provided an insight into the planning and implementation of a Single Window and shared experiences on a wide range of topics from initial concept and identification of benefits, through services provision and technology options to promotion and communication and future plans.

3.6 The success of Recommendation 33 since publication in July 2005, and the positive feedback from users and other stakeholders encouraged TBG15 to develop a suite of Single Window products. First, Recommendation 34 will offer guidance on data simplification and standardisation, a key component for the optimum use of a Single Window facility. Second, Recommendation 35 will provide advice and a checklist to establish the legal framework to ensure a Single Window can operate in a secure regulatory environment that protects the data and privacy of all users through identification, authentication and authorisation procedures, regulates access to the data including sharing, archiving and retrieval and establishes appropriate arbitration and dispute resolution process. Third, the Group are scoping the production of a Recommendation on the Interoperability of Single Window facilities. The aim of the guidance would be to explain the various forms of interoperability and provide advice on the options for operation including methods, technologies and transmission protocols. The Recommendation would be augmented with a Repository of Case Studies (Similar to recommendation 33) to give examples and share experiences of interoperability projects at all levels.

4. Membership

4.1 TBG15 membership is drawn from trade practitioners and experienced government officials from all the areas of the international trade transaction, the three segments of BUY - SHIP - PAY identified by the UN/CEFACT International Supply Chain Reference Model. These experts whose knowledge collectively provides a detailed and proven expertise in trade facilitation are nominated by UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation who may designate one or more delegates. Once appointed experts are expected to contribute

to the work based solely on their expertise and experience, and comply with the Intellectual Property Rights policy of the United Nations and the Code of Conduct for Experts on mission.

5. Delegated Responsibilities

5.1 The ITPWG is empowered in accordance with agreed UN/CEFACT Forum operating procedures to:

- issue, present and publish, in the area of practices, procedures and information flows within international trade transactions: a) analyses, b) reports on constraints, and c) proposals, to UN/CEFACT and other organizations;
- promote the adoption of standards, Recommendations and best practice in the area of trade facilitation;
- draft new UN/CEFACT Recommendations as appropriate;
- maintain existing UN/CEFACT Recommendations, as identified in the ITPWG work programme, by proposing revisions, amendments or deletion;
- co-operate and establish liaisons with other groups, working groups and organizations as appropriate.
- establish project teams and supporting teams as required;

To fulfil these responsibilities the ITPWG establishes liaisons and collaborates with other working groups, permanent groups and organisations. The working group also forms projects teams and support to undertake its work programme.

6. Key deliverables

6.1 The key deliverables of TBG 15 - ITPWG are:

- development of new relevant instruments and Recommendations for trade facilitation;
- revision, amendment or deletion of these instruments and Recommendations, in co-operation with the other groups and working groups;
- evaluation of the state and progress in, and systematic review and monitoring of the implementation of trade facilitation Recommendations and measures;
- notification to other groups and working groups of constraints identified in the field of international trade practices and procedures;
- documentation of business and government requirements;
- contributions to influence and support related work in other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; and
- provision of relevant educational, promotional and capacity building material. .

The Group is also responsible for raising awareness of its work to the wider audience of the international business community and national administrations.

7. Conclusion and Call for Participation

7.1 Trade facilitation is an important, time-tested and proven strategy that can deliver significant benefits for both private and public sectors conducting or involved in international trade. By adopting trade facilitation techniques and tools and simplification measures business can improve supply chain performance through transparency and predictability, and present a professional and progressive image to trading partners and trade services providers. For government trade facilitation can assist policy efforts and initiatives for the receipt of correct revenue yields, an increase in the effectiveness of trade control measures through the better deployment of resources and encourage greater trader compliance. Some benefits from trade facilitation can be gained easily and immediately and at relatively little cost. Other gains will accrue over the medium and long term and would need both political will and the allocation of appropriate resources both human and financial.

7.2 The international trade transaction process does not standstill. International trade is dynamic yet cyclical, ever-changing yet constant in objectives and goal. Developments in production and supply chain






operation, modes of transport equipment and provision, and information and communication technologies result in changes to existing commercial practices and official procedures and the creation of new, often better processes. To tackle the challenges of the modern and future international trading system, UN/CEFACT and within it TBG15 needs to maintain and promote existing trade facilitation instruments and respond to new economic, commercial and governmental environments. To meet these demands, the Group needs a vibrant and energetic membership base.


7.3 TBG15 would wish to extend an open invitation to experts to join the Group and participate in the exciting and important work of facilitating international trade processes. New members should consider contributing to the projects and tasks because TBG15 offers:


- the opportunity to inform the debate and influence the decisions on the development of the next generation of standards and instruments for the international trade process;
- the chance to share experiences on the introduction and operation of good trading practice;
- the means to enhance the body of knowledge and skills for actors and parties involved in managing and operating the international trade process;
- the prospect of developing capacity building tools and techniques for developing and transition economies with the aim of equalizing the global marketplace;
- the opportunity to engage with a committed and dedicated group of professionals in UN/CEFACT and exchange views and ideas;
- the chance to profit from early awareness of developments at the cutting-edge of trade facilitation thinking, planning and implementation; and,
- the ability to publicise strategies and initiatives for the benefit of both the business community and government within the home country or to a wider audience in a sub-region or regionally.


This is an indicative, not an exhaustive list of reasons. Potential new members will have individual motivation and incentive as well the interests and needs of their sponsoring organisation, whether private or public. Whatever reason is paramount; TBG15 will warmly welcome any and all applications to join the Group and requests to contribute to the work programme.


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News

With the conclusion of Recommendation 35, TBG 15 now has a suite of Single Window Recommendations with additional projects in the pipeline.

Status of Recommendation 12

The draft revision of Recommendation 12 has been sent to the HoDs for comments and posted on the UN/CEFACT

The Open Development Process Step 5 public review has been initiated for the draft revision

Status of Recommendations 5, 6 and 34

The inter-sessional approval of Recommendations 6 and 34 have been successfully concluded. The documents will be published in the UNECE webpage for recommendations.


Meetings

TBG 15 held a successful interim meeting in Paris, France on the 23 - 25 February 2011.


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Projects Status

Project Title	Project Name	Project Chair	Project Reporter	Extra Budget Resources	Start Date	End Date	ODP 1	ODP 2	ODP 3	ODP 4	ODP 5	ODP 6	ODP 7	ODP 8	Aim of
P060	Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide	Johan Pontén										[]			
P064	Revision of Recommendation N°11 - Documentary Aspects of the Transport of Dangerous Goods	Alex de Ligt			19.05.2009	2009						[]			
P065	Recommendation N°34 - Simplification and Standardization for International Trade	Geoff Cragge			15.09.2006							[]			
P066	Recommendation N°35 - Establishing a Legal Framework for an International Trade Single Window	Bille Luddy			09.08.2006							[]			
P090	Annex 6 on Aligned Invoice Layout Key for International Trade	Gordon Cragge			01.12.2004							[]			
P091	Recommendation N°12 - Measures to Facilitate Maritime Transport Documents Procedures	Johan Pontén			01.04.2010							[]			

[P101](#) Recommendation 
N [CP](#)
°36 - [Chan](#)
Single
Windows
Interoperability



[P103](#) Consultation 
Models [Pontén](#)
for
Public
and
Private
Sector
Consultation

17.06.  13        

Actions and Decisions
