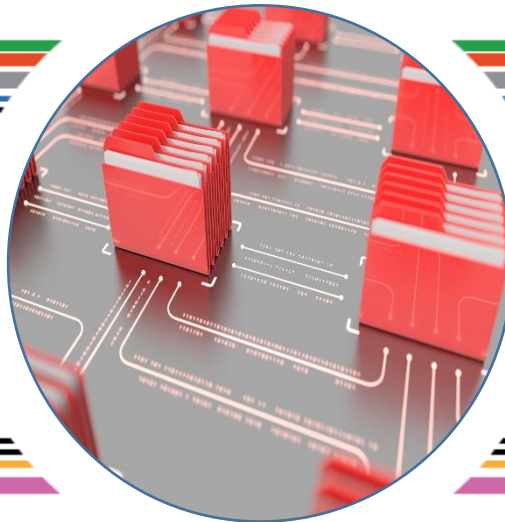# Facilitating Data Exchange
The Role of Web APIs

How APIs are likely to contribute the future of trade and transport data exchange

Background

A web API (Application Programming Interface) is the machine-readable equivalent of a web page. Almost every web application in use today is built as a composition of more granular functions provided by web APIs. For example, a booking site would typically use a google map API to show site locations, a bank payment API to collect payments, and an airline API to confirm a flight booking.

The use of APIs to support international trade and transport processes is also growing fast and there is an important role for UN/CEFACT standards to help ensure that APIs are consistently implemented across different service providers.

UN/CEFACT has already launched a number of projects that will help achieve that goal. However, web APIs do present a paradigm shift away from hub-centric document exchange towards a more dynamic consumption of data from a distributed web of different locations. Consequently, web APIs are not just a new technology for exchanging the same old documents – they are also disrupting established business models and bringing new business opportunities.

Objective

The purpose of this conference is to provide a non-technical audience with a sound understanding of how APIs work, where they are being used already, and what UN/CEFACT is doing about API standards. Specifically;

- An introduction to web APIs, resources, and events.
- Real examples of their use in the international supply chain.
- The UN/CEFACT RDM2API and API Town Plan projects and their relationship to existing UN/CEFACT products such as the Core Component Library.
- A future state vision for how trade, transport, financial, and regulatory processes can work together as a distributed suite of web APIs.

Agenda

09:00 – 09:15 – Opening Address and overview
- Ms. Maria Ceccarelli, OiC Director Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE
- Mr. Rajiv Garg, Domain Coordinator, International Supply Chain Orchestration Domain, UN/CEFACT

09:15 – 09:30 – What is a "Web API" ?
- Mr. Steve Capell, Project Leader API Town Plan project, UN/CEFACT

09:30 – 09:45 – UN/CEFACT relevance and proposed directions
- Mr. Ian Watt, Vice-Chair, UN/CEFACT

09:45 – 10:00 – From Data Elements to APIs – Example of Smart Containers project
- Ms. Hanane Becha, Project Leader, Smart Container project, UN/CEFACT

10:00 – 10:15 – Example of the use of APIs for Seafreight (Trade Lens & BoxTech)
- Mr. Nis Jespersen, Lean IT Architect, TradeLens.com

10:15 – 10:30 – Example of the use of APIs for regulators (Australian Government)
- Mr. Steve Capell, Project Leader API Town Plan project, UN/CEFACT

10:30 – 11:00 – Break

11:00 – 11:15 – Example of the use of APIs in EU banking and payments
- Ms. Liliana Fratini Passi, Domain Coordinator, Finance and Payment Domain, UN/CEFACT

11:15 – 11:30 – Presentation of the UN/CEFACT Projects
"API Town Plan" and "RDM2API"
- Mr. Steve Capell, Project Leader API Town Plan project, UN/CEFACT

11:30 – 11:45 – Customizing UN/CEFACT RDM for preparation of building an API
- Ms. Sue Probert, Chair, UN/CEFACT

11:45 – 12:30 – Discussion: impacts and proposed ways forward
- Mr. Ian Watt, Vice Chair, UN/CEFACT

What is UN/CEFACT?

UN/CEFACT, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to **exchange products and relevant services effectively**. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through **the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows**, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce.

UN/CEFACT has a global mandate. Participation in the UN/CEFACT Forum is open to all. There are some 300 experts representing every region in the world.

Within the framework of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves as the focal point for **trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards**, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. In this context UN/CEFACT was established, as a subsidiary, intergovernmental body of the UNECE.

For more information:
http://www.unece.org/cefact
See also: http://tfig.unece.org/

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This conference takes place during the 34th UN/CEFACT Forum in London.

Participation is free of charge, but all participants must register as participants to the Forum.

Detailed agendas and registration available at:
http://www.unece.org/uncefact/34thuncefactforum.html