Executive Guide on the electronic version of the International Maritime Organization’s Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (IMO FAL)

Summary

This document provides an executive guide to the work of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) concerning the International Maritime Organization’s Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (IMO FAL), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this electronic standard can be used to improve the exchange of data.

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I. Introduction

1. The International Maritime Organization’s Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, or “FAL Convention” dates to the 1960s. It aims to facilitate maritime traffic by providing a degree of uniformity in the number and type of declarations required by public authorities when a maritime vessel enters a port. The convention limits the number of copies that can be requested and defines seven standard documents covering ship, cargo, passengers, dangerous goods, postal requirements and health requirements.

2. The information from these declarations has been sent electronically for many years through a combination of United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT) messages. Since 2016, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been working to integrate the notion of an electronic version of these documents into the convention and propose an electronic model to achieve this. The IMO has worked with the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Standards Organization (ISO) to create a clear, semantic data set to cover the needs of the FAL Convention, which will soon be added to the convention itself.

II. Application

3. The IMO FAL documents are required for nearly all maritime transport arriving at port and the electronic equivalent will be accepted more and more frequently in the future.

4. UN/CEFACT has created a mapping of the IMO FAL requirements, compatible with its Multi-Modal Transport Reference Data Model (MMT RDM). This mapping should be integrated into the IMO FAL convention for the future reference of the user community.

III. Benefits

5. UN/CEFACT has been developing electronic business exchange standards for over thirty years. Through this rich experience it has established a comprehensive semantic library of business terms used in international trade, which covers all aspect of the supply-chain life cycle from materials management and commercial transactions to transport/logistics and regulatory requirements. The MMT RDM is a logical subset of its Core Component Library in order to cover all possible requirements in the transport and logistics realm. It is fully integrated in the current paper-based exchanges but allows for a smooth transition towards a process-driven (or event-driven) exchange of information.

6. The UN/CEFACT IMO FAL mappings are available free of charge, as are the other standards with which it is fully compatible.

IV. More information

Link to project page: https://uncefact.unece.org/display/uncefactpublic/IMO+FAL+electronic+compendium+mapping

Link to MMT-RDM: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/brs/BRS_T_L-MMT.zip