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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Tenth session, 17-19 May 2004

**CONSOLIDATED GROUP MANDATES AND TERMS OF REFERENCE  
UN/CEFACT INFORMATION CONTENT MANAGEMENT GROUP (ICG)**

Submitted by the Chairman of the UN/CEFACT Information Content Group (ICG) \*

\* This document is **for information** and contains part of the consolidated list of group mandates and terms of reference, which the secretariat has prepared for reference purposes. The mandate had previously been submitted to the Plenary either in an informal document or as part of a UN/CEFACT Steering Group Report. The Terms of Reference are being submitted for the first time and are **for approval**.

## **Mandate of the Information Content Management Group (ICG)**

### **1. Objectives**

#### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the Information Content Management Group (ICG) is to ensure the release of quality technical specifications for e-business. To achieve this aim it will be responsible for the:

- Management of the UN/CEFACT information repositories and libraries for electronic business and Recommendations that fall within its scope as listed in section 2;
- Technical conformance and the registration of the UN/CEFACT business requirements specifications;
- Normalization and maintenance of the base syntax neutral information components that serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
- Technical conformity and registration of syntax specific information objects and components.

#### **1.2 Scope**

The activities related to the ICG are within the mission and objectives of UN/CEFACT and its empowered groups. The groups work to produce trade facilitation and electronic business recommendations and technical specifications to advance global commerce.

### **2. Key Deliverables**

The key deliverables of the ICG are:

- A series of coherent, consistent and normalized reference libraries comprising the business requirements, information objects and code lists that are aligned with the domain reference models and serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
- Validating the conformance of technical specifications with the corresponding publication guidelines and for the release of approved syntax specific information objects and components;
- Processes and procedures for the maintenance of the libraries;
- Mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the library contents;
- Proposals, including draft Recommendations for review and approval by the UN/CEFACT Plenary;
- Maintenance of Recommendations:
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 3 - ISO Country Code for Representation of Names of Countries;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 5 - Abbreviations of INCOTERMS;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 7 - Numerical Representation of Dates, Time, and Periods of Time;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 81 - Unique Identification Code Methodology – UNIC;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 9 - Alphabetical Code for the Representation of Currencies;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 10 - Codes for Ship's Names;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 15 - Simpler Shipping Marks;
  - UNECE Recommendation No. 16 - United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE);

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1 In cooperation with the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG)

- UNECE Recommendation No. 17 – Payterms;
- UNECE Recommendation No. 19 - Codes for Modes of Transport;
- UNECE Recommendation No. 20 - Codes for units of measure used in international trade;
- UNECE Recommendation No. 21 - Codes for Types of Cargo, Packages and Packaging Materials;
- UNECE Recommendation No. 23 - Freight Cost Code;
- UNECE Recommendation No. 24 - Trade and Transport Status Codes;
- UNECE Recommendation No. 28 - Codes for Types of Means of Transport.

### **3. Functional Expertise of Membership**

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of the functions of UN/CEFACT, and its groups, as well as:

- Semantics of business practices and codification;
- Information modeling in the application of reusable design practices; and/or
- Syntax conversant with the rules defined for the syntax solutions supported by UN/CEFACT.

In addition Heads of Delegations may invite technical experts from their constituency to participate in the work. Experts are expected to contribute to the work based solely on their expertise and to comply with the UN/CEFACT Code of Ethics.

### **4. Geographical Focus**

The focus is global.

### **5. Delegated Responsibilities**

The ICG is empowered in accordance with agreed procedures to:

- Establish working groups and project teams as required;
  - Approve project proposals via the Forum Coordination Team (FCT);
  - Progress designated projects following UN/CEFACT's Open Development Process for Technical Specifications;
  - Collaborate with other UN/CEFACT Groups and the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) on implementation of its work plan;
  - Present draft proposals and/or recommendations to the UN/CEFACT Plenary;
  - Formally release any ICG deliverables not requiring UN/CEFACT approval;
  - Cooperate and establish liaisons with other groups and organizations as required.
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### **Statement of resource requirements**

Participants in the ICG shall be required to provide the resources required for their own attendance in the work of the ICG. In order to support the ongoing work of the ICG, the following resources are required to be provided either by the UN/CEFACT secretariat or by the appointed UN/CEFACT Services Provider:

- Provision of secretariat for the ICG. To cover consolidation, preparation, distribution and maintenance of official and working documents, including minutes and lists related to the meetings and the work of the group;
- Maintenance of logs and records of membership of the ICG;
- Coordination and distribution of relevant information and documents;
- Establishing and maintaining the ICG public Web site pages with appropriate links, document download facilities, and items of interest;
- Establishing and maintaining the ICG public and private list servers;
- Establishing and maintaining a Web based registry and repository capable of supporting the separate availability of the ICG library content at both a Public and an ICG level.

## **Terms of Reference of the Information Content Group (ICG)**

### **The ICG purpose**

The Information Content Management Group (ICG) is a Permanent Group of UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business) with the mandate to take all the steps necessary to ensure the release of quality technical specifications for e-business.

The mandate identifies the overall objectives of the group, its key deliverables and any delegated responsibilities that it may have.

The purpose of the ICG is to ensure that all technical specifications (UN/ECE recommendations, business requirements specifications, directories, libraries or repositories, core components, syntax specific implementations (such as UN/EDIFACT, XML, etc.) are released in accordance with the procedures detailed herein and are to the highest quality level. The purpose as defined in its mandate is as follows:

“to ensure the release of quality technical specifications for e-business. To achieve this aim it will be responsible for the:

- Management of the UN/CEFACT information repositories and libraries for electronic business and Recommendations that fall within its scope as listed in section 2 (*of the ICG Mandate*);
- Technical conformance and the registration of the UN/CEFACT business requirements specifications;
- Normalization and maintenance of the base syntax neutral information components that serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
- Technical conformity and registration of syntax specific information objects and components.”

### **The ICG terms of reference**

These Terms of Reference are drafted in compliance with document R.650 (Mandate, Terms of Reference and Procedures for UN/CEFACT).

### **Definition of the specific technical issues to be addressed**

The ICG is responsible for ensuring that quality technical specifications for e-business are produced by UN/CEFACT. In this context it shall be primarily responsible for the management, categorisation and normalisation of reusable information blocks. This content would be retained in a series of libraries (open repository) detailing the base information structures and components.

The content of the libraries will be generated through analysis of existing information blocks as used by various industries today in conjunction with the core component library content.

The Group is responsible for ensuring that the information models undergo normalization to align them with the domain reference models developed by the TBG.

The ICG is also responsible for the reusable process and information blocks contained in the UN/EDIFACT Data Element Directory, all Code Directories, and including the Business Process, the Business Object and the Core Component generic Libraries.

### **Key Deliverables**

The key deliverables of the ICG as defined in the Group mandate are:

- A series of coherent, consistent and normalized reference libraries comprising the business requirements, information objects and code lists that are aligned with the domain reference models and serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
- The release of validated and approved syntax specific information objects and components;
- Processes and procedures for the maintenance of the libraries;
- Mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the library contents;
- Proposals, including draft Recommendations for review and approval by the UN/CEFACT Plenary;
- Maintenance of Recommendations:
  - ❖ UNECE Recommendation No. 3 - ISO Country Code for Representation of Names of Countries;
  - ❖ UNECE Recommendation No. 5 - Abbreviations of INCOTERMS;
  - ❖ UNECE Recommendation No. 7 - Numerical Representation of Dates, Time, and Periods of Time;
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  - ❖ UNECE Recommendation No. 21 - Codes for Types of Cargo, Packages and Packaging Materials;
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  - ❖ UNECE Recommendation No. 24 - Trade and Transport Status Codes;
  - ❖ UNECE Recommendation No. 28 - Codes for Types of Means of Transport.

## Procedures

### ICG Membership

The ICG is a group of experts with a broad knowledge in the area of the functions of UN/CEFACT, and its groups, as well as:

- Semantics of business practices and codification;
- Information modelling in the application of reusable design practices; and/or
- Syntax conversant with the rules defined for the syntax solutions supported by UN/CEFACT.

*In addition, Heads of Delegation may invite technical experts from their constituency to participate in the work. All voting members shall have Head of Delegation approval. Experts are expected to contribute to the work based solely on their expertise and to comply with the UN/CEFACT Code of Ethics.*

### The ICG Chair

The ICG Chair is an elected position, and is not subject to approval or agreement by the UN or any governments. The position of Chair rests with the individual person rather than their sponsoring organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> In cooperation with the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG)

Requirements for the position of ICG Chair:

The nominee for the position of ICG Chair shall meet the following requirements:

1. Have been an active UN/CEFACT Forum member for the preceding 12 months;
2. Be a member in good standing of the UN/CEFACT member body;
3. Have commitment of adequate time to perform the duties and responsibilities.

It is required of the Chair to:

1. Have commitment of an adequate travel budget for the duration of his/her term;
2. Commit to attend all ICG meetings during his/her term of office.

#### Duties of the ICG Chair

The ICG Chair is elected for a two (2) year term.

The Chair will be a member of the Forum Coordination Team (FCT) and will be expected to attend FCT meetings during the Forum. In addition, there may be interim FCT meetings.

***The Chair will be an ex-officio member of the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) and either the ICG Chair and/or Vice-Chair will be expected to attend CSG meetings and the UN/CEFACT annual Plenary. The CSG meets at least three (3) times a year, most meetings being held in Geneva. The UN/CEFACT Plenary is held once (1) per year in Geneva.***

The Chair is expected to attend all ICG meetings, which will be a minimum of two (2) Forum meetings per year. The ICG may have one (1) or two (2) additional (interim) meetings per year.

The ICG Chair shall assume the following functions:

1. Calling and presiding over ICG plenary meetings,
2. Appointing convenors for proposed ICG Working Groups,
3. Assigning duties as necessary to advance the work of the ICG,
4. Communicating the official position of the ICG,
5. Preparing meeting agendas and organising the meeting programs

#### The ICG Vice Chair

The ICG vice Chair is an elected position, and is not subject to approval or agreement by the UN or any governments. The position of Vice Chair rests with the individual person rather than their sponsoring organisation.

Requirements for the position of ICG Vice Chair:

The nominee for the position of ICG Vice-Chair shall meet the following requirements:

1. Have been an active UN/CEFACT Forum member for the preceding 12 months;
2. Be a member in good standing of the UN/CEFACT member body;
3. Have commitment of adequate time to perform the duties and responsibilities;

It is required of the Vice-Chair to:

1. Have commitment of an adequate travel budget for the duration of his/her term;
2. Commit to attend all ICG meetings during his/her term of office.

### Duties of the ICG Vice Chair

The ICG Vice-Chair is elected for a two (2) year term.

The Vice-Chair will be a member of the Forum Coordination Team (FCT) and will be expected to attend FCT meetings during the Forum. In addition, there may be interim FCT meetings.

***The Vice-Chair will be an ex officio member of the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) and either the ICG Chair and/or Vice-Chair will be expected to attend CSG meetings and the UN/CEFACT annual Plenary. The CSG meets at least three (3) times a year, most meetings being held in Geneva. The UN/CEFACT Plenary is held once (1) per year in Geneva.***

The Vice-Chair is expected to attend all the ICG meetings, which will be a minimum of two (2) Forum meetings per year. The ICG may have one (1) or two (2) additional (interim) meetings per year.

The duties of the ICG Vice-Chair include, but are not limited to:

1. Assuming all duties of the ICG Chair, in the event that the Chair is absent from, or cannot attend a meeting;
2. Assuming all duties of the ICG Chair, in the event that the Chair resigns or cannot perform his/her duties, until a new election can be held,
3. Performing ICG required duties as delegated by the ICG Chair.

### Election of ICG Officers

The following rules and requirement apply to the election of the ICG Chair and ICG Vice Chair.

#### *General*

The nomination and voting for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair shall be performed independently. No one person shall hold more than a position of Chair or Vice Chair. The following rules shall be followed for the nomination to a position:

1. Nominations and elections shall occur separately;
2. Nominations will be open until the start of the elections, allowing for nominations from the floor;
3. All nominations made 20 days prior to the election should be forwarded by email to the ICG mailing list <mailto:cefact-icg@list.unicc.org>.
4. A copy of the nominations for the position of Chair or Vice-Chair shall be sent to the Forum Coordination Team mailing list <mailto:cefact-fct@list.unicc.org>.
5. Any nominations at less than 20 days prior to the election should be made at the beginning of the day of the election;
6. Candidates may nominate themselves and it will not be necessary to second nominations.
7. The candidates for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair shall meet the requirements as stipulated in section 1.3 and 1.4 above;
8. Each candidate shall present his/her motivations for wishing to take the position before the group plenary prior to the election.

The elected Chair and Vice-Chair shall not be from the same organisation, company or sector. An Interim replacement of elected positions shall take place at the earliest scheduled meeting following notification of the vacancy. The interim officer will serve for the un-expired term of his/her predecessor. In normal circumstances, notification of the date/ time for the election shall be made at a minimum of 30 days in advance of the election.

## **Balloting**

The Selection for elected positions shall be by secret ballot. A ballot shall only be held during the course of a UN/CEFACT Forum meeting. All approved members present at the meeting shall form the quorum (see section 9) for the ballot.

Separate ballots shall be submitted for each position. Balloting for Chair and Vice Chair shall be held sequentially, in that order.

An election team, nominated by the group plenary, shall conduct the counting and tabulation of ballots.

The election team shall determine if a candidate has received a simple majority of the eligible votes cast, or if a runoff is necessary. In the event of a runoff, another ballot shall be taken on a reduced list. One-third (rounded down) of the candidates on the initial list having the least number of votes shall be eliminated to create the new list. Two successive tied votes with the same number of names on the ballot will be resolved via a coin flip by the Chair of the election team.

Each ICG member may cast one vote during each ballot. Proxy voting is not permitted.

## **Removal of ICG Officers**

Elected officers may be removed from office for cause by a 2/3 vote of all approved ICG members.

## **ICG Secretarial function**

The ICG Secretarial function is a volunteer position provided by an ICG member. The selection of the position is via the ICG Plenary. The ICG Secretarial function provides the administrative support to the ICG. The service may be provided through the use of a designated Support Services Provider (SSP) or automated processes.

### *Scope*

The ICG Secretarial function has duties related to internal organisational support, and external support activities. This function provides the focal point for all communications, proposals, recommendations or any other documents between the ICG members, the UN/CEFACT Secretariat, UN/CEFACT Group Secretariats and any other interested parties regarding ICG matters.

All submissions and communications relative to ICG work program are handled by the Secretarial function. Additional support may also be provided through UN/CEFACT member bodies, at the discretion of the UN/CEFACT member body.

### *Internal Organisational Support*

The Secretarial function shall assume, but be limited to, the following tasks in consultation with the Chair:

1. Consolidating, preparing, and distributing ICG meeting minutes,
2. Maintaining logs and records of written requests for membership and member status,
3. Maintaining mailing lists of ICG members,
4. Maintaining a list of roll call votes by date and subject,
5. Maintaining a log of all ICG documents/proposals,
6. Maintaining and distributing the current agenda,
7. Maintaining key process dates relative to ICG Procedures, and insuring that all ICG Working groups are kept apprised of these dates and deadlines,
8. Providing all acknowledgements and communications with external parties interfacing with ICG,

9. Performing any other records-keeping or administrative duties as the Chair or ICG may determine necessary,

### *External Support*

The Secretarial function shall assume, but not be limited to, the following tasks relative to ICG support for external relationships:

1. Tracking of correspondence, documents, etc. between UN/CEFACT Groups and Secretariats;
2. Ensure the registration of all minutes, lists, and meeting documents;
3. Maintain a list of all IGG meeting dates and locations;
4. Ensure the distribution of all ICG documents;
5. Performing any other duties determined necessary by the ICG or Chair.

### **Formal decision taking**

The objective within the ICG is to achieve consensus. In absence of consensus, then, and only then, shall a vote be taken and a decision made by a 2/3 majority of the voting members present.

The ICG takes formal decisions during a plenary meeting. The quorum shall be defined as consisting of at least 50 percent of the registered voting members of ICG being present at the beginning of the meeting.

An ICG Working Group may apply more restrictive rules.

### **Project initialisation**

All new areas of development within the ICG or concerning the ICG must be initiated via a formal project request.

The objective of such a request is to identify the Team Leader that will bring the project to fruition, the subject matter to be addressed, the resources, the deliverables and the timescale involved.

On another level, it will provide visibility to all the other UN/CEFACT Forum Groups of the work being undertaken.

A new ICG project request shall be submitted to the ICG Plenary for ICG approval.

Upon ICG approval, the ICG will transmit the project to the FCT for final approval in order to ensure visibility of the work in progress to the other Groups, to provide for the potential participation by other Groups and to ensure consistency with other projects.

### **ICG Working Groups and Project Teams**

All ICG Working Groups (WGs) and Project Teams (PTs) shall be open to all ICG members. PTs shall be established by the ICG plenary upon the FCT approval of a documented project. The PT shall be responsible for bringing the project to a successful conclusion.

A project shall be of a temporary nature.

If a project is identified as being of a permanent nature, the ICG Plenary shall transition it into a WG. Each WG or PT shall have terms of reference and procedures which have been agreed by the ICG plenary. A WG or PT shall only be dissolved by the ICG Plenary.

### WG / PT Membership

Membership of a WG or PT is open to any ICG member. The WG or PT procedures shall determine how this representation is organised.

WGs and PTs shall have representation from at least two UN/CEFACT member bodies.

The objective within the WGs or PTs is to achieve consensus. In the absence of consensus, then, and only then, shall the voting procedure be brought into play and a decision made by a 2/3 majority of the voting members.

### WG Officers

Each ICG WG shall have a Chair and optionally, Vice-Chair(s), elected by the members of the WG. The officers elected shall be members of the ICG and have experience in the operation of the ICG, the UN/CEFACT process and the relevant subject area.

All Officers are elected for a 2 years term. They may be re-elected by the relevant WG. In case of resignation of an officer, the officer will inform the WG of his/her intention. It is essential that the nominee have the necessary resources and administrative support to carry out their responsibilities.

### WG Secretariat

A Working Group shall have an identified secretariat.

### Permanent Working Groups

The ICG has two permanent Working Groups that form an integral part of its structure:

- The Audit Working Group (ICG-WG1)  
The Audit Working Group is responsible for ensuring that all publications of UN/CEFACT technical repositories are compliant with the current set of business rules that govern them. Each publication of a repository or directory shall require an audit statement indicating compliance with the business rules in question.
  - The UNECE Code Recommendations Working Group (ICG-WG2)  
ICG-WG2 shall be responsible for the maintenance, and ensuring the technical conformance, of all existing UNECE Recommendations identified in Section 2.2 (Deliverables) and for the development of new UNECE Recommendations related to codes. Each draft revision of an UNCE Recommendation shall follow UN/CEFACT's Open Development Process and shall be subject to a public comment period of at least two months. UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation shall be notified of the availability of a draft revision and the period for comment. Following the conclusion of the comment period, ICG-WG2 shall address all comments received. Depending on the comments received, the ICG-WG2 shall issue a new draft revision for comment or shall prepare a final revision for approval. Final revisions to the body text of a UNECE Recommendation shall be approved, firstly the ICG Plenary and secondly, by the UN/CEFACT Plenary. Final revisions to the code list of any UNECE Recommendation shall be approved by the ICG Plenary and notified to the UN/CEFACT Plenary. ICG-WG2 may recommend to the ICG Plenary that an existing UNECE Recommendation be withdrawn. The decision to withdraw a UNECE Recommendation shall be approved, firstly the ICG Plenary and secondly, by the UN/CEFACT Plenary.
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