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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Follow-up on the 14th United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business Forum: Buy-Ship-Pay and UNeDocs

Note by the Bureau[1]

Summary

This report, presented in the form of a five-part annex, summarizes the discussions at the stakeholder sessions on Buy-Ship-Pay/UNeDocs[2] at the 14th UN/CEFACT Forum, held in Rome from 20 to 24 April 2009. It also outlines ways to facilitate the next steps, where experts interested in contributing can participate in a systematic work programme aimed at providing the deliverables requested by stakeholders. It further contains an information note that was prepared immediately after the Forum to communicate information on the status of UNeDocs.

A summary of the sessions, as well as an outline of ways forward, was prepared for the Bureau. This has involved a comprehensive review of key issues and, in some cases, identification and clarification of possibly related developments. The summary is also included in this document. As it became apparent that some supplementary information on the uses of the Core Component Library would be helpful, a separate note was prepared and is included in this report. There were strong indications from some participants that they would give favourable consideration to supporting the next steps, including possible funding of project development. Work on the Buy-Ship-Pay – UneDocs project is defined in the UN/CEFACT Programme of Work 2008-2009, document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2007/20, paragraph 23, (h) and (i) and in annex I, paragraph 11, outputs 1.5.9 and 1.5.10.

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[1] This document was submitted late due to resource constraints.
[2] United Nations electronic trade documents.

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INTRODUCTION

1.   Several steps have been taken since the Bureau's communication to heads of delegation on 22 March 2009, which followed a review of findings contained in the Buy-Ship-Pay/UNeDocs Review Team report:

   (a)   Stakeholder sessions were held during the 14th UN/CEFACT Forum held in Rome from 20 to 24 April 2009. Heads of delegation were subsequently informed of the status of these efforts on 11 May 2009;

   (b)   A detailed report, "Follow-up to Stakeholder Sessions on Buy-Ship-Pay/UNeDocs and Next Steps" (see annex, part I), was then drawn up by Peter Amstutz, UN/CEFACT Plenary Vice-chair, and submitted to the Bureau;

   (c)   The Bureau reviewed the report and its recommendations in detail and is now transmitting the report to heads of delegation and stakeholders.

2.   Ways forward have been identified and a mapping of deliverables to envisaged projects or work in progress is provided in part IV of the annex to this report.

3.   In order to facilitate the ongoing work being transitioned from the initial project deliverables, the Bureau is issuing a call for participation, particularly focused on three envisaged areas of analysis that address many of the issues raised at the stakeholder meetings in April. These are:

   (b)   Core Component Library Outreach (CCLO);

   (c)   Priority Stakeholder Messages (PSM);

   (d)   Core Component Library Framework (CCLF).

4.   Experts interested in responding to this call for participation are requested to contact Peter Amstutz <uncefact@unece.org>, who is coordinating this activity on behalf of the UN/CEFACT Bureau, with the assistance of the secretariat. An effort is also being made to bring together practical demonstrations of how different methodological approaches might work to support differing requirements of stakeholders, as input to a more fundamental review of what might be adjusted in existing methodologies.

5.   Arrangements are also being made to advance all of these "steps forward" at the upcoming 15th UN/CEFACT Forum meeting to be held in Sapporo, Japan, 28 September to 2 October 2009. This will include scheduling meetings of experts interested in participating in the above work areas. Details will be provided on the Forum website.

BACKGROUND

6.   This report summaries the exchange of views that took place during the stakeholder sessions on Buy-Ship-Pay/UNeDocs[1] at the 14th Forum of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) from 20 to 24 April 2009. It also outlines ways forward to facilitate the next steps, where experts interested in contributing to these developments can participate in a systematic work programme aimed at achieving the deliverables identified by stakeholders.

7.   The sessions demonstrated broad appreciation of the steps taken by UN/CEFACT Bureau and the secretariat to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to exchange views and for issues raised to be discussed with members of the Bureau and the secretariat present. Several important outcomes were identified by stakeholders and a set of deliverables became apparent.

8.   Briefly stated, it was agreed that a note should be provided within ten working days of the end of the Forum to communicate information about the status of UNeDocs. This was completed on time[2].

9.   In addition, a summary of the exchange of views of the sessions and an outline of ways forward[3] were to be prepared for consideration by the Bureau as soon as possible. This has involved a comprehensive review of key issues and, in some cases, involved clarification of possibly related developments. It was also evident that some supplementary information on uses of the Core Component Library would be helpful and a separate short note has been provided[4].

10.   When asked if stakeholders would support next steps, including opportunities to fund project developments, there were strong indications from some participants that such matters would be given favourable consideration.

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[1] United Nations electronic trade documents.
[2] See annex, Part II.
[3] See annex, Part I.
[4] See annex, Part III.

Annex

PART ONE

FOLLOW-UP TO STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS ON BUY-SHIP-PAY:
UNeDOCS AND NEXT STEPS

Report by Mr. Peter Amstutz, Vice-chair of UN/CEFACT

I.   OVERVIEW

1.   Three stakeholder sessions were attended by over 40 participants, which included a range of perspectives: UN/CEFACT heads of delegation, implementers (service providers and software companies), representatives of organizations and observers.

2.   At the request of the Bureau, Mr. Peter Amstutz, UN/CEFACT Plenary Vice-chair, was asked to moderate the sessions, with the assistance of the secretariat, and to take in hand the preparation of this note.

3.   The topics were as follows:

Session 1   **Stakeholder needs assessment**
Focus on strategic issues regarding stakeholder requirements with a policy orientation.

Session 2   **Deliverables, tasks and skills**
Focus on the range of specific envisaged deliverables and what essential tasks and skills may be needed to ensure stakeholder requirements can be achieved.

Session 3   **Priorities and ways forward**
Focus on bringing together the issues raised earlier and on formulating recommendations about priorities and next steps for consideration by the Bureau, with specific attention to providing a stakeholder-driven roadmap that can foster confidence in going forward.

II.   SUMMARY

A.   Session 1

4.   The first session involved open discussion with the aim of documenting specific strategic goals to communicate to UN/CEFACT regarding UNeDocs and the Buy-Ship-Pay (BSP) Data Model. It also touched on more generalized strategic goals surrounding UN/CEFACT standards

and methodologies. This discussion was brought about by asking the participants key questions, with the aim of collecting and consolidating the answers for the final session.

1. Key questions covered:

    (a) Why is BSP - UNeDocs relevant to you strategically?

    (b) What is your highest strategic priority in terms of requirements for continuing and strengthening this work?

    (c) What do you see as the major obstacles to going forward?

    (d) What resources would you be willing to contribute to achieve your strategic requirements?

2. The specific goals covered:

    (a) Achieve a clear understanding of what UNeDocs is and is not;

    (b) Clarify scope and deliverables;

    (c) Achieve a clear understanding of how UNeDocs fits in with existing UN/CEFACT methodologies and standards;

    (d) Enable single window implementations;

    (e) Simplify existing data structures;

    (f) Acquire tools to promote regional integrations;

    (g) Achieve straight-through processing to reduce costs;

    (h) Achieve CCL alignment with WCO data model;

    (i) Provide a bridge between XML, EDIFACT, and paper;

    (j) Provide a single standard that is global in nature, less region specific;

    (k) Enable the global long distance supply chain (B2B, B2G, G2G);

    (l) Proper communication coordinated with UN/CEFACT management objectives.

B.   Session 2

5.   The second session again involved open discussion, and was intended to foster dialogue about specific deliverables associated with BSP-UNeDocs, and what tasks skills would be necessary to achieve these results. This discussion was also brought about by asking key questions, with the aim of collecting and consolidating the answers to reflect back at the participants during the final session.

1. The key questions were:

    (a) What is BSP - UNeDocs to you, i.e. what does it mean to you?

    (b) What do you need as deliverable(s) from BSP-UNeDocs?

(c)   What do you see as the major tasks needed in order to produce these BSP-UNeDocs deliverables?

(d)   What skills do you feel are necessary in order to accomplish these tasks?

2.   The specific goals that were identified during the session were:

(a)   Harmonized cross-border reference data model to include regulatory (customs, et.al) requirements;

(b)   Provide a methodology for assembling paper documents based on UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations;

(c)   Further information about UN/CEFACT methodologies to produce messages;

(d)   Produce implementation guidelines;

(e)   Provide a mapping between UNLK, EDIFACT, XML documents, and the data model;

(f)   Provide linkage between UN/CEFACT data model, UNTDED, EDIFACT, and WCO data model;

(g)   Provide a structure for generic data model that supports substructures (various views into the data model);

(h)   Procedures for control management (maintenance procedures) of these deliverables;

(i)   Quality improvement of BSP data model;

(j)   Provide data models and RSMs for documents;

(k)   Produce rules for conformance to various UN/CEFACT standards;

(l)   Backward compatibility or migration path from existing UN/CEFACT published forms.

3.   From a project perspective, the participants agreed that the following would be important:

(a)   Clearly defined stakeholder-driven deliverables;

(b)   Effective project management;

    (i) Staged priority delivery according to Stakeholder needs;

    (ii) Clear timelines;

(c)   Clear and frequent communication of scope, schedule, status;

(d)   Strong management oversight of project;

(e)   Clear documentation;

(f)   Stakeholder group with broad sectoral and PG participation;

(g)   Possibility of multiple projects.

4.   The participants also identified that some combination of the following skills would be necessary to carry this work forward:

(a)   Project Manager(s) with the following traits:

   (i)   Optimist;

   (ii)   Superior communication skills;

   (iii)   Track record in delivering projects;

(b)   Sectoral expert(s) with good background to review data model;

(c)   Business analyst;

(d)   CCL expert;

(e)   Data Modelling expert(s);

(f)   Technical writer;

(g)   External "reference group" of experts for periodic review;

(h)   Collaboration Tools.

C.   Session 3

6.   The third session reflected back strategic priorities, specific deliverables, task, and skills to the participants to ensure that everything was captured. Participants then ranked each deliverable and the following ordering of priorities emerged:

1.   Priority One

(a)   Harmonized cross-border reference data model to include regulatory (customs etc.) requirements;

(b)   Further information about UN/CEFACT methodologies to produce messages.

2.   Priority Two

(a)   Provide a methodology for assembling paper documents based on UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations;

(b)   Provide linkage between UN/CEFACT data model, UNTDED, EDIFACT, and WCO data model;

(c)   Provide a structure for generic data model that supports substructures (various views into the data model).

3.   Priority Three

(a)   Produce implementation guidelines;

(b)   Provide a mapping between UNLK, EDIFACT, XML documents, and the data model;

    (c)   Quality improvement of BSP data model;

    (d)   Produce rules for conformance to various UN/CEFACT standards.

4.   Priority Four

    (a)   Procedures for control management (maintenance procedures) of these deliverables;

    (b)   Provide data models and RSMs for documents;

    (c)   Backward compatibility or migration path from existing UN/CEFACT published forms.

III.   STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT FOR NEXT STEPS

7.   Finally, during the conclusion of the last session, stakeholders were asked if they would actively support next steps, including opportunities to provide funding.

8.   There were strong indications from some participants that such matters would be given favourable consideration.

IV.   WAYS FORWARD

9.   The deliverables advanced by the stakeholders can be categorized into two main areas:

    (a)   Broad in context and are being undertaken by UN/CEFACT as part of the current work programme;

    (b)   Specific in nature and identifiable as deliverables in three ways:

        (i)   Gap analyses;

        (ii)   Project(s) under way in the FMG/TBGs;

        (iii)   Deliverables to be supported by additional envisaged projects.

10.   A mapping of deliverables to envisaged projects or work in progress is provided in part III below and more details will follow. As was discussed during the sessions, some of these efforts have been anticipated and it appears that duplication of effort may be reduced. This seems particularly evident in the case of the electronic Business, Government and Trade (eBGT) initiative, which was approved at the last UN/CEFACT Plenary, most notably in terms of the area of gap analyses.

A.   Strengthening Core Component Library

11.   The stated stakeholder deliverable to have a "harmonized cross-border reference data model" can be seen as within the scope of a Core Component Library Outreach (CCLO) project, where gaps in the CCL, specifically in relation to other libraries and sources will be identified and work to close these gaps will be prioritized and then implemented with the collaboration and

support of stakeholders. In particular, emphasis on gaps between the Trade Data Elements Directory (ISO 7372) and the WCO data model would be identified with the intent of meeting the stated deliverable to "provide a mapping between UNLK, EDIFACT, XML documents, and the data model." The GOVCBR UN/EDIFACT message that is under development between WCO and UN/CEFACT addresses some of these linkages, but further work is needed in this area. This gap analysis would also work to achieve the deliverable of "quality improvement of BSP data model".

B.   Priorities for programme of work

12.   In addition to identifying gaps in the Core Component Library, another eBGT effort concerning Priority Stakeholder Messages (PSM) would serve to identify and prioritize the gaps found in the current development of messages and trade facilitation instruments. These gaps include the linkages between various types of messages and forms, specifically certain aspects identified by stakeholders requiring the deliverable to "provide a mapping between UNLK, EDIFACT, XML documents, and the data model." The intent of PSM would be to identify the range and priority of these documents and messages and would facilitate Bureau and FMG guidance on planning of deliverables to support stakeholders through the UN/CEFACT programme of work.

C.   Adjusting methodologies

13.   An eBGT gap analysis focusing on the Core Component Library Framework (CCLF) should provide support for stakeholder needs that concern "UN/CEFACT methodologies to produce messages", by highlighting and clarifying gaps in existing methodologies and the use of the Core Component Library. Another stakeholder priority should also be addressed which concerns providing "a structure for generic data model that supports substructures (various views into the data model)". Some of the techniques being reviewed include the "BIM Approach", which is not an approved UN/CEFACT standard or methodology. In addition, CCLF analyses could offer input for further methodological work to "produce rules for conformance to various UN/CEFACT standards". A complete review of the methodological architecture of UN/CEFACT, as well as aspects concerned with specific instruments for trade facilitation, is also under consideration. Some special attention will also need to be given in order to "provide a methodology for assembling paper documents based on UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations", to "provide a mapping between UNLK, EDIFACT, XML documents, and the data model", and to provide "backward compatibility or migration path from existing UN/CEFACT published forms". A demonstration project that could show how different methodological approaches might work, as input to the more fundamental review of what might be adjusted in existing methodologies, could play an important role in advancing issues on a timely basis.

D.   Upgrading staff resources

14.   As part of considerations towards upgrading staff resources needed to progress and to maintain standards, methodologies and documentation, another eBGT gap analysis - Sustainable Operational Support – is envisaged. For example, additional efforts will be needed for development of "procedures for control management (maintenance procedures) of these

deliverables" and for staffing these properly. It will also aim to address gaps in the maintenance and production of needed by stakeholders to "produce implementation guidelines".

E.   Timely steps forward

15.   Following consideration of this note by stakeholders, next steps will be taken in eBGT and additional aspects of the programme of work, under the guidance of the Bureau and the Forum Management Group, with a view to providing an enhanced and detailed roadmap that will provide for coherent and timely support of needs and priorities articulated in the stakeholder sessions. In some cases, this may greatly benefit from the involvement, through intersessional reporting and consultation, of the Plenary in order to ensure stakeholder priorities are properly identified and widely supported.

PART TWO
STATUS OF THE UNeDocs PROJECT

Note by the Bureau issued 11 May 2009

I.   ROME STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS AND THE UNeDocs PROJECT

1.   During the April 2009 UN/CEFACT Forum in Rome, three sessions were organised with stakeholders in order to provide them with opportunities to exchange views, in particular, about the United Nations electronic trade documents (UNeDocs) project.

2.   One of the priority outcomes of these well-attended and constructive sessions - with about 40 participants - was the urgent need to clarify the status of UNeDocs. This is the purpose of this short note.

3.   More generally, the Bureau is reviewing all of the strategic and specific outcomes of the stakeholder sessions and will address ways forward as soon as possible.

II.   UNeDocs: IS A PROJECT, NOT A STANDARD, NOT A DATA MODEL, BUSINESS INFORMATION MASTERS ARE NOT STANDARDS

4.   UNeDocs is a project that is currently under review by the Bureau in order to determine appropriate next steps and to ensure that user prioritized deliverables are fully considered and taken forward in the UN/CEFACT programme of work.

5.   One of the challenges associated with "UNeDocs" as a brand is that it sometimes is viewed as synonymous with a smaller or a larger part of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations, e.g. the UN Layout Key and the UN/CEFACT Core Component Library (CCL).

6.   However, UNeDocs is not a standard. UNeDocs is not an official data model. More specifically, Business Information Masters (BIMs) are not standards.

III.   TOWARDS A GUIDELINE: RE-USE OF DATA FOR COMPARABLE OUTPUTS (PAPER DOCUMENTS / ELECTRONIC MESSAGES)

7.   To minimise misunderstandings and provide additional information, some of the methods used for UNeDocs are being considered for integration within a formal guideline or recommendation, covering re-use of data along the international supply chain to produce comparable outputs in paper documents and electronic messages. This should also cover the benefits from using the CCL.

8.   It should be noted, in addition, that as so many misunderstandings still seem to continue, serious consideration is also being given to re-naming the UNeDocs brand.

9.   As has been noted before, the Business Information Masters (BIM) approach is not a UN/CEFACT standard or a recognized methodology. BIMs also do not follow current UN/CEFACT methodologies. Moreover, implementations involving BIMs do not provide any guarantees of current or future interoperability. On the other hand, new methodologies are also now being explored as possible standards in order to more fully address stakeholder requirements.

IV.   WAYS FORWARD

10.   Following the Rome stakeholder sessions, a summary report is currently being prepared on all the outcomes achieved. The Bureau plans to review the report as soon as possible and to articulate alternatives ways forward that should achieve the required deliverables within the envisaged timeframes. Additional information will be communicated to UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation and stakeholders in the coming weeks.

PART THREE

**UN/CEFACT CORE COMPONENT LIBRARY:
SUPPLEMENTARY USER INFORMATION**

1.   As from UN/CEFACT's D.08B Core Component Library (CCL), the library is provided in two parts to facilitate use by stakeholders:

UN/CEFACT Message Components Library	Includes parts of the CCL as audited by the Information Content Management Group (ICG) which support the production of UN/CEFACT Messages by the Applied Technology Group (ATG).
UN/CEFACT Reference Components Library	All parts of the CCL, including the UN/CEFACT Message Components Library, as harmonised by the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG).

2.   The purpose of this short note is to provide additional information for a variety of users, notably with regard to the Aggregate Business Information Entities (ABIEs).

I.   UN/CEFACT MESSAGE COMPONENTS LIBRARY

3.   The Message Components Library contains ABIEs that have been used in the production of UN/CEFACT approved messages, in particular, in the form of XML schemas. These ABIEs are associated with business rules that apply to their specific usage context and it is likely that these business rules would need to be adjusted before they could be used in other contexts. Please note that the re-use of UN/CEFACT approved messages particularly facilitates global interoperability.

II.   UN/CEFACT REFERENCE COMPONENTS LIBRARY

4.   The Reference Components Library (which includes the Message Components Library) contains ABIEs that can be used to develop reference models, which are subsets of the library. For example, some UN/CEFACT work in progress is focusing on business processes involving a "buy-ship-pay" reference model. Although the ABIEs in the UN/CEFACT Reference Components Library can be used in a variety of ways to produce models and messages, some may be considered too generic to enable production of UN/CEFACT approved messages.

5.   The purpose of the Reference Components Library is, as its name implies, to be used as a reference. The ABIEs provide commonly used structures, recommend the use of international code lists (where applicable) and enable opportunities for mappings involving other data libraries and international standards, such as the United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDED).

6.   For those interested in developing their own messages using the CCL, the Reference Components Library offers an evolving repository. Steps may also need to be taken to apply further qualification to the referenced ABIEs.

7.   The UN/CEFACT Reference Components Library is a collaborative work-in-progress of many standards-oriented experts and continuing feedback from all stakeholders is welcomed.

8.   The common goal is to offer over time an ever-improving one-stop-shop data dictionary that can support various efforts and levels of interoperability.

PART FOUR

STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES MAPPED TO ENVISAGED FRAMEWORK OF DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	eBGT Gap Analyses				FMG / TBG projects	Additional envisaged projects
	Core Component Library Outreach (	Core Component Library Framework	Priority Stakeholder Messages	Sustainable Operational Support		
PRIORITY ONE						
Harmonized cross-border reference data model to include regulatory (customs, et.al) requirements	X				X	
Further information about UN/CEFACT methodologies to produce messages		X				
PRIORITY TWO						
Provide a methodology for assembling paper documents based on UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations			X			X
Provide linkage between UN/CEFACT data model, UNTDED, EDIFACT, and WCO data model	X					

Deliverable	eBGT Gap Analyses					
	Core Component Library Outreach (	Core Component Library Framework	Priority Stakeholder Messages	Sustainable Operational Support	FMG / TBG projects	Additional envisaged projects
Provide a structure for generic data model that supports substructures		X				
PRIORITY THREE						
Produce implementation guidelines				X		
Provide a mapping between UNLK, EDIFACT, XML documents, and the data model			X			X
Quality improvement of BSP data model					X	
Produce rules for conformance to various UN/CEFACT standards		X				
PRIORITY FOUR						
Procedures for control management (maintenance procedures) of these deliverables				X		
Provide data models and RSMs for documents			X		X	

Deliverable	eBGT Gap Analyses					
	Core Component Library Outreach (	Core Component Library Framework	Priority Stakeholder Messages	Sustainable Operational Support	FMG / TBG projects	Additional envisaged projects
Backward compatibility or migration path from existing UN/CEFACT published forms						X

PART FIVE

eBGT GAP ANALYSIS PROJECTS

I.   CORE COMPONENT LIBRARY FRAMEWORK

1.   <u>Deliverable</u>: a document that reviews possible gaps in methodologies associated with using the current framework of the UN/CEFACT core component library, with a view to strengthening support for stakeholder needs and identifying opportunities and ways forward.

II.   CORE COMPONENT LIBRARY OUTREACH

2.   <u>Deliverable</u>: a document that reviews the scope and contents of the UN/CEFACT core component library in relation to other related libraries, e.g., the Trade Data Elements Directory (ISO 7372), with a view to strengthening support for stakeholder priority goals, particularly towards offering guidance on (a) what gaps could be filled for UN/CEFACT to offer an increasingly comprehensive "one-stop-shop" core component library and (b) articulate roadmaps in going forward.

III.   PRIORITY STAKEHOLDER MESSAGES

3.   <u>Deliverable</u>: a document that reviews the range of messages needed by UN/CEFACT stakeholders and that identifies gaps in current developments, pointing the way to opportunities and a roadmap for fostering semantic interoperability in trade facilitation instruments, particularly by providing recommendations in ways to strengthen possible gaps in core components.

IV.   SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

4.   <u>Deliverable</u>: a document that lists (a) skill sets and (b) tasks for experts needed to fill specific gaps in available competencies required to achieve timely delivery of UN/CEFACT products and services, e.g. library harmonisation, audit, technology support (e.g. schema development), capacity-building, legal topics, secretariat support, with a view to encouraging Plenary heads of delegation to identify national candidates to participate in these activities.