



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2011

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Eighteenth session

Geneva, 15-17 February 2012

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

UN/CEFACT structure, mandate, terms of reference, and procedures

Overview of and rationale for the new UN/CEFACT structure

Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau for discussion

Summary

This document for discussion provides an overview of and rationale for the new UN/CEFACT structure based on the “Revised mandate, terms of reference and procedures for UN/CEFACT” (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15/Rev.3).

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) has put in place a streamlined management and project-oriented framework. Plenary approval of the revised “Mandate, Terms of Reference and Procedures for UN/CEFACT”¹ sets the stage for the transitional steps now in progress.

2. This note provides a short overview of and rationale for the new UN/CEFACT structure.

II. Rationale for change

A. Problem statement

3. The previous UN/CEFACT structure² comprised a Bureau, regional rapporteurs, a Forum Management Group and five Permanent Groups with sub-groups. This came to a total of more than 25 different units, most of which were formally organized with elected chairs and vice-chairs, and with the support of the UNECE secretariat. Significant work was achieved over time within this structure, but there were also many challenges perceived by both experienced and new participants.

4. The large number of groups, organized in silos, presented organizational and management challenges.

5. Some delegations interested in pursuing work within UN/CEFACT on recommendations and standards indicated the following as key factors in leading to delays in deliverables: a lack of understanding of the processes and apparent resource blockages—sometimes owing to there not being enough skilled experts in a particular area.

6. There was also a sense of a lack of transparency and communication, which may itself have been a result of the complexity of organization. Nonetheless, specialists in specific groups may have had all the information they required to proceed within their own domains.

7. There was also concern about a need for greater outreach and collaboration, to reduce duplication with other organizations also engaged in the development of standards.

8. In a nutshell, there seemed to be too many layers of organization and management, a need to focus on a strategic framework of priorities, with attention on UN/CEFACT’s cross-domain contribution to trade facilitation and electronic business, on greater outreach, and, on ensuring faster completion of project deliverables.

B. Other drivers for change

9. Additional drivers for change, as detailed in the draft Bureau note on next steps going forward of 14 June 2011 (including Annex 7-1), include:

- Recommendations from UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM)

¹ ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15/Rev. 1 (to be referred throughout as document 15) received intersessional approval on 28 March 2011, replacing R.650/Rev.4. Ongoing efforts to fine-tune document 15 are envisaged to continue during the eighteenth Plenary.

² See R.650 Rev.4

- Permanent Group Mandate Renewals
- More timely availability of deliverables
- Opportunities from greater stakeholder collaboration
- Outreach to stakeholders / questionnaires
- Gap analyses
- Maturity of experience / lessons learned.

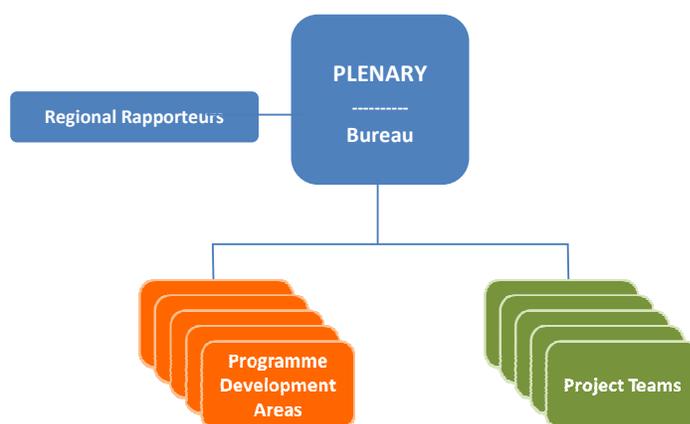
III. Revised structure

10. To address the challenges outlined above, and following extensive consultation with member States and other stakeholders, the Bureau revised the structure, procedures, mandate and terms of reference UN/CEFACT. The new structure, detailed in document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15/Rev.1, focuses on faster delivery of the priority strategic outputs to address public and private-sector requirements.

11. Under the new structure, the Plenary remains the highest authority regarding all aspects of UN/CEFACT work, subject to any approval required by the UNECE Committee on Trade, the UNECE Executive Committee or other bodies within the framework of the United Nations. Heads of Plenary delegations³ can represent all interested member States of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations recognized by the Economic and Social Council.

12. A regularly updated, Plenary-approved, programme of work⁴ remains the key driver for UN/CEFACT activities, which are aimed at developing and maintaining recommendations and standards for trade facilitation and electronic business.

13. The following is an overview of the new structure:



14. The core structure of UN/CEFACT is supported by the UNECE secretariat, a roster of experts, domains, and Bureau programme support activities.

³ See UN/CEFACT country heads of delegation: Guidance on responsibilities, duties and procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2011/7/Add.1).

⁴ See programme of work 2010-2011 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2008/16), draft programme of work 2012-2013 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2012/11) and the accompanying, soon to be updated, UN/CEFACT Integrated Strategy (ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/5).

Bureau

15. The Plenary-elected Bureau consists of a Chair and at least four vice-chairs⁵.
16. The Chair, with the assistance of the vice-chairs and the UNECE secretariat, is responsible for preparing the Programme of Work for approval by the Plenary, with a view to providing a coherent framework that serves the needs of United Nations Member States and other stakeholders within the context of UN/CEFACT's mandate and terms of reference. This includes outreach to and collaboration with those parties interested in working with UN/CEFACT to achieve common goals and, wherever possible, to avoid duplication of work both within and outside of UN/CEFACT.
17. The Chair, with the assistance of the vice-chairs and the UNECE secretariat, is responsible for scheduling, coordinating and developing agendas for meetings of the Plenary, the Bureau and UN/CEFACT experts.
18. Following consultation with the Bureau, the Chair invites one or more vice-chairs to assist in formulating, guiding and monitoring the programme of work through a number of Programme Development Areas. The Chair informs the Plenary of these arrangements and any adjustments that the Bureau considers should be made to improve the achievement of deliverables.

Programme Development Areas

19. Under the leadership of the vice-chairs, experts contribute within and across Programme Development Areas, focusing on (a) preparing the programme of work. In particular, this also involves preparation of proposals for projects, project implementation and the maintenance of outputs, and (b) outreach to avoid duplication of effort with other organizations developing recommendations and standards.
20. An initial set of Programme Development Areas includes:
- Trade and Transport Facilitation
 - Supply Chain
 - Regulatory
 - Sectoral
 - Methodology and Technology.
21. Projects linked to Programme Development Areas and related domains are set out on the UN/CEFACT website.

Project Teams

22. Project teams develop and maintain deliverables.
23. Projects follow a Plenary-approved Open Development Process, which involves key principles being followed by all members of Project Teams⁶:
- Welcome participation by anyone designated as an expert by a Head of Delegation to UN/CEFACT.

⁵ See updated draft Bureau Rules of Procedure (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/17/Rev.3).

⁶ See updated Open Development Process (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/24/Rev.1), updated Intellectual Property Rights Policy (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/20/Rev.1) and Code of Conduct (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/18/Rev.1)

- Encourage global input.
 - Work collaboratively and effectively.
 - Not incorporate specific hardware and/or proprietary software requirements into their processes or deliverables, or the implementation thereof.
 - Understand and agree to be subject to the UN/CEFACT intellectual property rights policy.
 - Understand and agree to be subject to the UN/CEFACT Code of Conduct.
24. All projects concerned with the development of UN/CEFACT deliverables within the UN/CEFACT programme of work need to follow a set of stages related to their deliverable's publication type. All stages are briefly listed below:
- Project inception
 - Requirements gathering
 - Draft development
 - Public review
 - Project exit
 - Publication
 - Maintenance.
25. A project officially starts when the Bureau approves a proposal from a project submitter.
26. A project submitter may be a Plenary delegation, a Project Team, or a member of the Bureau.
27. The proposal must include (a) a purpose, (b) a clearly defined scope, (c) a list of deliverables, timeframe and (d) exit criteria.
28. A proposal for any of the main types of UN/CEFACT publications must be accompanied by written expressions of support from three country heads of delegation.
29. The Project Team must take into account the original timeline for its deliverables, and must inform the Bureau if it sees that it cannot meet the original schedule.
30. The Bureau may decide to disband a Project Team before it reaches the Project Exit stage and report this to the UN/CEFACT Plenary.
31. To facilitate approval by the Plenary, deliverables should be translated into all UNECE official languages as early as possible.

Regional Rapporteurs

32. UN/CEFACT has two regional rapporteurs: one for Africa and one for Asia and the Pacific.
33. Each Rapporteur:
- Promotes UN/CEFACT's interests and activities among Governments, intergovernmental organizations, relevant trade associations and business and trade facilitation organizations, with the assistance of the UNECE secretariat--which is responsible for official communications.
 - Encourages the participation of experts in UN/CEFACT's work programme and promotes the implementation of the standards, recommendations and other deliverables.

- Coordinates UN/CEFACT's activities in the region.

34. The mandate of regional rapporteurs is carried out, wherever possible, in coordination with the Bureau, the heads of delegation to UN/CEFACT from the region, the UNECE secretariat and other regional commissions of the United Nations.

UNECE secretariat

35. UN/CEFACT receives assistance from and collaborates with the UNECE secretariat regarding the programme of work.

Roster of experts

36. A roster of experts lists experts and their skills nominated by heads of Plenary delegations.⁷ It also helps to identify those willing and able to take up specific programme-support tasks, e.g. communication.

Domains

37. Domains play an essential role in outreach to public- and private-sector activities in fields relating to trade facilitation and electronic business.

38. Currently the following domains support Programme Development Areas and projects:

- agriculture
- accounting and audit
- customs
- e-government
- environmental management
- finance and payments
- insurance
- international trade procedures
- procurement
- supply chain management
- transport
- travel and tourism.

39. Domain coordinators are confirmed by the Bureau⁸.

Bureau Programme Support

40. Public and private-sector experts who volunteer to help perform various special tasks associated with the programme of work are identified as assisting Bureau programme-support activities.

⁷ See the roster of experts form (Annex A).

⁸ See the Domain Coordinator Candidacy form (Annex B).

IV. Benefits of the new structure

41. The new organizational arrangements rely on a streamlined management and project-oriented framework, facilitated by greater organizational flexibility. Benefits are expected to follow from the two primary sets of activities supporting the Plenary-approved programme of work: Programme Development Areas and project teams. Regional rapporteurs and the UNECE secretariat are also engaged in activities that should contribute to achieving deliverables.

42. Under the responsibility of vice-chairs, the Programme Development Areas play a strategic role in helping to develop and manage parts of the programme of work. In order to ensure that it is far-reaching in its scope and horizon, but also practical with respect to envisaged nearer-term deliverables, the initial set of Programme Development Areas proposed by the Bureau to the Plenary will be adjusted as needed to meet evolving requirements, with a view to ensuring that UN/CEFACT's objectives as a whole are properly formulated and met.

43. Particular Programme Development Areas aim to bring enhanced forward-looking coherence in addressing key programme of work themes within the scope specified for the Areas as well as across the Programme Development Area structure. They take measures to ensure that the proposed projects are consistent with the overall UN/CEFACT vision.

44. By raising the programme of work preparations and monitoring to a strategic level, it is envisaged that this will open up opportunities for member States and stakeholders in the public and private sectors to work with UN/CEFACT in areas where it can add value. Both a top-down and bottom-up approach to the formulation of the programme of work are expected to help increase extrabudgetary funding.

45. The goal is to examine carefully both within and across all Programme Development Areas the key contributions UN/CEFACT can make in a global context, especially to follow up on earlier gap analyses, and to increase collaboration with other organizations interested in and working on similar developments, in order to avoid duplication of effort and to establish, through active liaisons, various ways that can bring benefits to all participants.

46. The project teams are the engines of growth for developing and maintaining UN/CEFACT products, and the project leaders are accountable for the deliverables. In particular, project leaders report to the vice-chairs, with the strong support and engagement of domain coordinators for projects related to or associated with their domains.

47. In the new framework, the Bureau is also involved a range of tasks that are essential, and often have presented bottlenecks, in supporting the achievement of the programme of work. Under the responsibility of the vice-chairs, these tasks, which collectively are designated as Bureau Programme Support⁹, rely on the willingness of volunteer experts to respond to calls for participation. The tasks are facilitated by detailed procedures and checklists to ensure the efforts are timely, efficient, effective, transparent, consistent and able to be validated for conformity with guidelines.

48. The focus of UN/CEFACT's contribution to trade facilitation and electronic business is the set of deliverables specified in the programme of work. The experts provide the knowledge, skills and experience to precisely identify, to formulate and to implement requirements. These experts are nominated by heads of delegation and contribute as

⁹ For example, Bureau Programme Support cover tasks such as programme of work coherence and coordination, project monitoring, harmonization, Core Component Library, audit/quality, maintenance, schema development and maintenance, directories, conformance, legal issues, communication (external/internal), marketing, events, liaison, training/capacity-building.

independent professionals, without representing the special interests of their country or organizations.

49. The neutrality of volunteer¹⁰ expert participation also contributes to strengthening the UN/CEFACT public-private partnership by focusing on common themes and common approaches to meeting requirements that are re-usable in the contexts of organizational, national, regional and multinational solutions.

50. In the new framework, experts are invited to provide information about themselves to the UN/CEFACT roster of experts¹¹ and create a knowledge/competency pool. The experts:

- participate in Project Teams that have specific deliverables, notably, to develop and maintain UNECE recommendations and UN/CEFACT standards for trade facilitation and electronic business.
- collaborate with other experts in domain communities, as recognized in the UN/CEFACT Registry of Domain.
- can serve in a leadership capacity as domain coordinators¹², contributing to tasks in PDAs and Project Teams.
- can respond to calls for participation to apply their skills in performing needed specific recurring tasks in support of the programme of work.

51. Expert activities associated with domains ensure the continuity of the public-private partnership. This is seen as a fundamental part of UN/CEFACT's multidimensional approach to developing recommendations and standards as possible¹³.

52. The UN/CEFACT website will host information about each Domain's scope and activities¹⁴. Domain coordinators, who work closely with the vice-chairs, provide leadership in their domains in many ways, e.g. by bringing coherence to the contributions of domain experts in PDAs, providing guidance and coaching for preparing project proposals as well as by monitoring of project developments.

53. More than 60 projects and more than 20 domains are linked to the initial set of Programme Development Areas.

54. As the PDAs evolve over time, the PDAs and their Domain support will change. It is also likely that participants in the roster of experts will change, as will the Registry of domains.

55. Balance in the new framework of document 15 is ensured through the role of the vice-chairs, who are responsible for PDAs and those projects that are designated within the PDAs. This is the essence of the streamlined management and project-oriented framework. Two key supporting elements to the way in which experts contribute their skills are collaboration within and across domains and their responses to specific calls for participation in tasks associated the Bureau-coordinated support for the programme of work.

¹⁰ "Volunteer" in this context means not paid by UNECE.

¹¹ See Annex for copy of Roster of Expert form.

¹² See Annex for copy of Domain Coordinator candidacy form.

¹³ This is largely based on the current domain coverage of the Permanent Groups, particularly with respect to the domains included in the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG). Accordingly, this should facilitate experts maintaining the continuity of ongoing collaboration with colleagues in their community of domain expertise and visible recognition of domains for their sponsors and counterparts in other organizations.

¹⁴ Examples of what could appear on the UN/CEFACT website are in preparation.

56. Domains, which are confirmed by the Bureau, provide the way for experts to find each other and collaborate with colleagues in their Domain communities, which may be inside and outside of UN/CEFACT, to ensure the needs of domains are included in the UN/CEFACT context. This is an important principle of organization, which fosters the sustainability of the public-private partnership with respect to domains, in order to assist in forming project teams and monitoring their activity. Domain coordinators, who support and report to the vice-chairs, play a key role in this process.

A. Addressing Other Drivers for Change

57. The new structure provides a way for addressing other drivers for change as identified in section II above, providing some flexibility in fine-tuning the organization over time.

A.1. Recommendations from EXCOM

58. As UN/CEFACT's work continues to be driven by the Plenary-approved programme of work, the new structure puts the central focus of management attention on its strategic development, practical implementation and governance. In particular, the structure provides for a more manageable organization of tasks and processes that will provide greater transparency and will facilitate more timely project deliverables to address critical needs of member States and other stakeholders. As part of the transitional steps, due diligence is being taken with respect to all of the specific EXCOM recommendations concerning: information-sharing and communication, governance, balance in programme activities, enhanced involvement of countries with economies in transition, capacity-building and cooperation with other institutions. Outreach is considered as a fundamental principle that can bring about participation of a wider range of countries and from around the world.

A.2. Permanent Group Mandate Renewals

59. The simplified management structure puts an emphasis on flexibility within the Plenary-approved programme of work, without requiring a permanent group structure. The emphasis is on collaboration, project-oriented management and creating processes that encourage transparency, communication and enhanced participation.

A.3. More timely availability of deliverables

60. With responsibility vested with the vice-chairs and project leads, and organized within strategically oriented cross-domain Programme Development Areas, the Bureau can monitor and support projects with a view to achieving more timely outputs, focusing on issues of priority and potential Plenary engagement where needed. This is also facilitated by an updated Open Development Process and the assistance of volunteer experts, identified through the roster of experts, who are engaged in Bureau Programme Support activities.

A.4. Opportunities from greater stakeholder collaboration, Outreach to stakeholders / questionnaires, Gap analyses, Maturity of experience / lessons learned

61. The Programme Development Areas open up opportunities for greater consultation and collaboration, provide a way to address results of questionnaires, gap analyses, and lessons learned, especially by identifying projects that can develop needed recommendations and standards.

Annex A

UN/CEFACT ROSTER OF EXPERTS

Volunteer Statement of Expert Skills and Interests

LAST NAME		First Name	
Plenary Delegation		Date of last update	
Email address		Telephone	
<p>Please note: Information provided below may be included in, and on request withdrawn from, a comprehensive list of experts involved in UN/CEFACT activities and is envisaged to appear on the UN/CEFACT website. Submitters may request in their covering email which details, if any, should be restricted for use internally within UN/CEFACT. Completed forms should be sent to Mika.Vepsalainen@unece.org.</p>			

Please check appropriate boxes for skills you can contribute to UN/CEFACT work:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1.	<u>trade facilitation specialist</u> , e.g., familiarity with national, regional and international aspects of policy, regulations, nomenclature please specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.	<u>sectoral area specialist</u> , e.g., familiarity with paper-based and automated processes. From current UN/CEFACT domain list: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3 : _____ other(s), please specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.	<u>nomenclature harmonisation specialist</u> , e.g., for subject-matter areas, for core components library
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.	<u>technology specialist</u> , e.g., <input type="checkbox"/> modelling techniques, <input type="checkbox"/> technical architecture, <input type="checkbox"/> EDIFACT message production <input type="checkbox"/> XML message production <input type="checkbox"/> technical applications specialist <input type="checkbox"/> web application specialist
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.	<u>Validation specialist</u> , e.g., familiarity with validation control processes in areas such as core components, messages, standards development processes
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.	<u>editor / communications specialist</u> , e.g. drafting, report writing, publications, marketing
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.	<u>event management specialist</u> , e.g. assisting in Forum and other meetings
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.	<u>web specialist</u> , e.g, on design and development of web sites and other tools
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.	<u>applications specialist</u> , e.g., spreadsheet, graphics and other applications/tools, please specify: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.	<u>capacity building specialist</u> , e.g. <input type="checkbox"/> training in team-building <input type="checkbox"/> training in project management <input type="checkbox"/> training in cross-cultural collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> specialised knowledge in, recommendations and standards <input type="checkbox"/> specialized knowledge in standards development processes
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.	<u>project manager</u> , e.g., experience in coordinating multinational and multidisciplinary experts, track record of producing project deliverables on time and reporting on progress along the way, project planning, leadership, tracking deliverables
<input type="checkbox"/>	12.	<u>other</u> , please specify: _____

Annex B

Candidacy Form for Domain Coordinator

LAST NAME		FIRST NAME	
Plenary Delegation		Country of Residency	
Email address		Telephone	
<p><i>Please note: information supplied below is envisaged to appear on the UN/CEFACT website unless restrictions are requested by the submitter (see Annex 5-2). Candidacy Forms are reviewed by the Bureau, as a basis for confirming appointment, with due consideration of input and/or nominations from experts registered in the respective domain(s) on the Roster of Experts. Completed forms should be sent to Mika.Vepsalainen@unece.org.</i></p>			

1.	<p><u>Roles and responsibilities of UN/CEFACT Domain Coordinators</u></p> <p>Domain Coordinators work with the Vice Chair(s) responsible for Programme Development Area(s) and can involve one or more specific domains. One or more Domain Coordinators can be appointed for a specific domain, particularly in cases where the volunteer burden could benefit from being shared, and to ensure timely back-up. Bureau appointments of Domain Coordinators are made for a period of two years and are renewable. Domain Coordinators cover their own costs, which includes participation in face-to-face and virtual meetings and which may vary from domain to domain. On the basis of experience, estimates of workload and costs will be developed and made available to candidates upon request.</p> <p>The Coordinator's role and responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving as contact/communication point on issues concerning one or more domains. • Monitoring the developments in the domain inside and outside of UN/CEFACT. • Informing the Vice Chair responsible for the relevant PDA and the other domains of the developments in the domain, especially projects,. • Making sure that documents circulated for internal review are circulated to the relevant experts in the domain and that the comments are channeled to the Project Team within the timelines. • Maintaining coordination and communication with other domains, as appropriate. • Coaching newcomers with respect to UN/CEFACT's methods and techniques, especially in the context of preparing project proposals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>2. <u>I volunteer to be a Domain Coordinator for one or more of the following domains noted below.</u></p> <p>From current UN/CEFACT domain list:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3: _____</p> <p>other(s), please specify: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>3. I would like to be a Domain Coordinator for the reasons noted in Annex 5-3.</p>